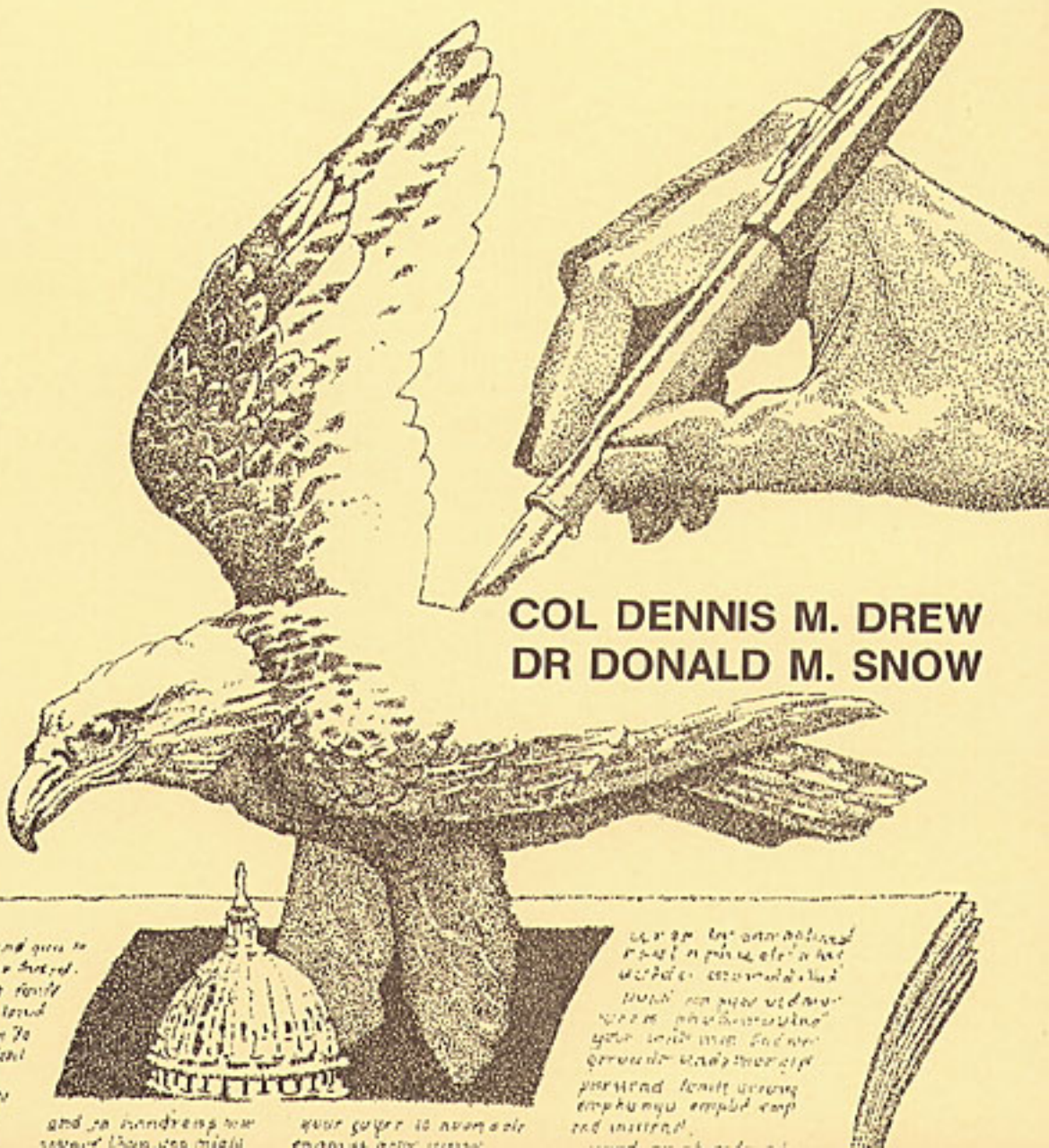
MAKING STRATEGY

An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems



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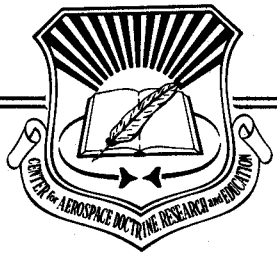

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An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems

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FOREWORD

National security strategy is a vast subject involving a daunting array of interrelated subelements woven in intricate, sometimes vague, and ever-changing patterns. Its processes are often irregular and confusing and are always based on difficult decisions laden with serious risks. In short, it is a subject understood by few and confusing to most. It is, at the same time, a subject of overwhelming importance to the fate of the United States and civilization itself.

Col Dennis M. Drew and Dr Donald M. Snow have done a considerable service by drawing together many of the diverse threads of national security strategy into a coherent whole. They consider political and military strategy elements as part of a larger decisionmaking process influenced by economic, technological, cultural, and historical factors. I know of no other recent volume that addresses the entire national security milieu in such a logical manner and yet also manages to address current concerns so thoroughly. It is equally remarkable that they have addressed so many contentious problems in such an evenhanded manner.

Although the title suggests that this is an introductory volume—and it is—I am convinced that experienced practitioners in the field of national security strategy would benefit greatly from a close examination of this excellent book.

SIDNEY J. WISE
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PREFACE

This volume has been seven years in the making. In 1980 the authors began working on a textbook for Air University's Air Command and Staff College that would introduce the concept of strategy and the vagaries of strategymaking to midcareer Air Force officers. The outcome of that effort was *Introduction to Strategy*, a rather rudimentary volume that, surprisingly, has remained in constant use for the past seven years. The current work is an outgrowth of *Introduction to Strategy* and it incorporates all that we have learned about writing and organizing an introductory text that examines the most fundamental and yet arcane military art.

The authors owe a great debt of gratitude to the outstanding production staff of the Air University Press for their considerable labors in bringing this volume to fruition. We also owe a monumental debt to our editor, John E. Jordan, Jr., whose considerable skill, great insight, and limitless patience have turned our scribblings into a readable text.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about national security strategy: what it is, what its objectives are, what problems it seeks to solve or at least manage, and what kinds of influences constrain and create opportunities for the development and implementation of strategies.

The heart of the problem with which national security strategy deals is the series of military threats that the nation must confront. Thus, the making and implementing of strategy are largely an exercise in risk management and risk reduction. The notion of risk requires definition at the outset. In a more or less traditional manner, risk is defined as the difference between the threats posed to our security by adversaries and potential adversaries and our capabilities to counter those threats. In circumstances where adequate resources (manpower, materiel, perceived will, etc.) are available, risk can be reduced and security increased. When there is a gap between the amount of threat and capability to counter it, the difference is the risk one incurs.

In the best of all worlds, risk assessment and management would not be problems. One would simply list all the existing and potential threats to national security and then allocate whatever resources were needed to blunt those threats, thereby reducing all risks to nonexistence.

In the real world, it is impossible to remove risk altogether for at least two related reasons. The first is that there is honest disagreement among those who make policy about what the threats are, how serious they are, and which are in need of being reduced and to what degree. About such problems as the physical survival or territorial integrity of American soil, there is agreement that the threat, however defined, must be countered. Even at this consensual level, defining the nature of the threat and determining the appropriate means to counteract it is a matter of disagreement,

as the entire debate about appropriate nuclear strategy and forces vividly testifies. In other areas, such as the threats to American interests posed by various political and military forces in Central America, there is considerable disagreement about how much threat (if any) is posed by the different forces and thus what (if any) military capabilities we need to counter them.

The other constraint is on the resources available to counter the threat. The debate of the early and middle 1980s is strong testimony that American defense policy, along with other activities of the federal government, will be under increased fiscal constraint; and there are no easy solutions to the problem. The heart of this constraint is the political (and many would argue economic) unacceptability of large discrepancies between federal revenues and expenditures—the deficit. After running less than 2 percent of the gross national product during the 1970s, the deficit has ballooned to approximately 6 percent in the mid-1980s; even more distressing, an increasing proportion of the accumulating debt is held by foreign nationals (the largest single holder of American debt in 1987 was a Japanese bank).

The size of the deficit and the resultant constraint on military activities are not going to change easily or rapidly. The solution will require difficult decisions that will undoubtedly be unpopular in some quarters. Given the structure of the federal budget (almost 85 percent of expenditures are for entitlement programs, defense, and service of the national debt—in that order), there can be little reduction of the debt that does not include sizable sacrifices in funding for national defense. The only alternative way to reduce the debt is to increase federal revenues—tax increases.

This discussion serves as a sample of the real-world constraints within which strategy and strategists must operate. The heart of the strategic problem is how to adapt as best as possible to the major military contingencies that do or might confront the United States while recognizing the impossibility of reducing to zero the risks that each contingency presents. Generally speaking, there are three major planning cases or contingencies with which strategic

planners must deal: strategic nuclear war, major conventional war, and low-intensity conflict.

Quite obviously, strategic nuclear war with the Soviet Union is the worst case because the consequences of such a war are clearly the most devastating. Given the possible disastrous outcomes of such a war, avoidance of its occurrence through deterrence has been the highest national priority. There are, however, differing ideas about how likely such a war is, how it might start and be conducted, and thus what strategies and forces are necessary to manage the risk it presents.

A major conventional (at least in its early stages) war in Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Pact has been the principal concern for strategists and planners since the end of World War II. Because such a war would pit nuclear-armed nations against one another and because such a war could escalate to a strategic nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, its deterrence is a primary consideration. Once again, there are major disagreements (both within the United States and within the NATO alliance) about how likely such a war is and thus what kinds and levels of effort are necessary to maintain deterrence.

The third contingency is not a single contingency at all, but is instead the problem of potential American involvement in third world conflicts that fall under the general rubric of low-intensity conflict. This is a relatively new topic of concern within military planning circles, and full consideration has been stunted by the perceived resemblance of many of these situations to Vietnam. Although there is considerable agreement that these types of situations provide the most numerous "opportunities" for American military involvement, there is considerable disagreement about the propriety of such involvement and what kinds of preparations the United States should make for these contingencies. The contemporary debate about appropriate American response to the politico-military situation in Central America is illustrative of this disagreement.

One thing is clear about these three contingencies—they affect thinking about strategy and its implementation. Each contingency poses a different set of strategic questions with different answers, and these answers and the capabilities they suggest are not necessarily mutually supportive. The strategies and forces one devises to deter strategic nuclear war, in other words, may not help deter conventional war in Europe, and they almost certainly have little deterrent effect on low-intensity warfare in the third world. Likewise, a lesson of the Vietnam War is that preparations for conventional war in Europe did not translate into appropriate capability to deal with that situation. Similarly, few would argue that all the counterinsurgency preparation in the world would reduce the risk of strategic nuclear war. These points help define the problem of strategy and prepare a starting point for our investigation of making strategy. As long as resources are scarce and the allocation of resources to reduce the risk in one contingency does not necessarily reduce other risks as well, the problem of strategy will be risk management rather than risk alleviation. How one wisely devises plans of action and capabilities in support of those plans is thus at the heart of the art of strategymaking.

The organization of the rest of this book is intended to facilitate the reader's understanding and appreciation of strategic problems and processes. In the first section, we look at the evolution of strategy and the process by which strategy is devised, a process that forms the framework for the entire book. This approach is unique. Many authors have offered advice and counsel concerning how to make strategy decisions. This volume, in contrast, concentrates on what decisions must be made and the factors that influence those decisions. Thus, this book is descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature. The second section deals with the political dimensions of strategy in terms of the relationship between political and military objectives and the constraints that political realities place on strategy. The third section concentrates on the military dimensions of strategy and includes considerable material on the contingency cases just introduced. The fourth section

examines the institutional and other influences that shape decisions within the strategy process. In the final section, we return to the three contingency cases as a way to frame consideration of future strategic problems.

SECTION I

FRAMING THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 1

STRATEGY IN PERSPECTIVE

The fundamentals of military strategy have not changed in recorded history. Military leaders (strategists) have always struggled, with greater or lesser degrees of success, to overcome the problems involved in marshaling and using military forces to achieve a desired objective while coping with myriad influences, many of which are beyond anyone's control. This is not to say that the process of making strategy is as simple, easy, or straightforward today as it once must have been.

The role of the military strategist has become more complicated. Modern military forces are generally larger, much more lethal, far more complex in their organization, and often more specialized in many of their functions. Thus they are more difficult and expensive to train and support, particularly for operations in environments that differ in opportunities and restraints. Modern military forces operate in three dimensions (land, sea, and air) and perhaps even in a fourth (space). Often they operate on a worldwide basis. All of these factors, and a host of others, complicate the process of making strategy.

Military leaders have developed various methods for coping with the increasing complexities of warfare and the attendant difficulties in developing effective strategies. The most obvious and pervasive of these methods has been the proliferation of larger military staff organizations and, within the staffs, the use of complex tools of analysis. Perhaps the ultimate extension of this trend is found in the American military establishment with its elaborate staff system that often

depends on sophisticated, high-speed, computer-based quantitative analysis techniques.

The almost overwhelming complexity of modern military decisionmaking obscures the fact that the fundamentals of strategy remain unchanged. We must understand how and why the strategymaking process has evolved before we examine the process itself. Although it would be instructive to begin our analysis in ancient times, it will suffice to begin in the eighteenth century. The two intervening centuries have witnessed monumental changes in politics, economics, and technology that illustrate how and why the strategy process has evolved.

Warfare in the Eighteenth Century

Military historians commonly refer to the period from the latter part of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the French Revolution as an age of limited warfare. The limitations were neither in terms of the number of wars fought nor in terms of the number of years in which war occurred. Nor was war limited in terms of combat casualties. Rather, wars during that period were generally fought for limited objectives with limited resources and with a limited number of battles.

The eighteenth century was the age of absolute monarchies in Europe (England being a semiexception). The dynastic armies that supported these monarchs fought wars for what can only be classified as dynastic objectives—a slice of land here, a city there, and the rights of succession to various thrones. Such objectives did little to arouse the common man's enthusiasm for war and gave him no real reasons to risk his life in battle. The fervor of the religious wars of the seventeenth century was a dim memory, and the ideological passions spawned by the American and French revolutions had not yet appeared.

Dynastic armies were also limited in size. The limited taxation base of preindustrial economies could not support massive military establishments. Further, primitive, almost subsistence level economies militated against large-scale conscription efforts that would strip away the most productive members of a society and place them in military service. One result of this situation was that mercenary soldiers, selling their skills and services to the highest bidder regardless of nationality, dominated many European armies. Such mercenary forces were expensive to maintain. To fill out the ranks, monarchs were forced to impress nonmercenaries, drawing them primarily from the dregs of European society.

Faced with relatively small yet expensive armies, military leaders struggled to increase the effectiveness of their forces by making the most effective use of available technology. The standard infantry weapon was the muzzle-loading smoothbore musket. Slow to reload and only accurate to about fifty yards against man-sized targets, this weapon's limitation dictated the tactics used on the battlefield. The problems were how to increase firepower and how best to use available firepower. One solution was to increase the speed of reloading, thereby increasing the rate of fire. But there were limits to the speed attainable. A second solution was to fire muskets by volley to increase their shock effect. A third approach was to pack more men with muskets onto the battlefield. However, the heavy muzzle blast created by eighteenth-century muskets often did as much damage to friendly forces (by blowing in their eardrums) as the muskets did to the enemy. The solution was to pack the men tightly together in long, straight lines so that each man could discharge his weapon without doing harm to his comrades (alignment being all important to protect friendly eardrums). All three approaches were combined in this tactical solution to an essentially technological problem, and from this solution came the term *linear warfare*, used to characterize the tactical formations of the era.

Linear formations formed very broad fronts. Consequently, they were clumsy tactical formations, difficult to deploy after the march to the battle, and difficult to move in attacking after deployment. The attackers in eighteenth-century battlefield minuets had to march, stop, realign their formation, and then march on—often while under fire from artillery and skirmishers—until they were close enough to fire, effectively, often an extremely short range. It was reported, for example, that in the battle at Blenheim (1704), the British did not fire their first volley until their leading brigadier touched the French barricades with his sword.

Needless to say, the successful application of linear tactics required incredibly disciplined soldiers to face such rigors. Frederick the Great, the Prussian soldier-king, once opined that his men must fear their officers more than their enemy. Harsh corporal punishment was universal in European armies and was meted out for even minor breaches of discipline. Soldiers could be flogged to death on orders from their officers (who were mostly members of the nobility) with the official cause of death listed as "died by act of God." Such was the status of officers and their men.

To instill discipline and to teach the intricate maneuvers required by linear formations, drill was endless and exacting. Prussian officers were noted for their use of surveyors' instruments to align and realign ranks drilling on parade grounds. Conventional wisdom held that it took two years of discipline and practice to make a good soldier in the age of linear tactics.

The results of all these factors were several. First, as already mentioned, armies were relatively small and were not drawn from the bulk of the population. Since armies consisted of mercenaries and the dregs of society, most of a nation's society was isolated from its army except in supporting it through tax levies of one sort or another. Second, monarchs hesitated to put their armies at serious risk because of the time and cost of rebuilding an army should it be defeated (even victorious

armies required considerable "rebuilding" after major battles). Third, because armies were slow and cumbersome to maneuver, both sides had to tacitly agree to fight a battle. Either side could withdraw faster than the other side could deploy and march within firing range. Fourth, wars tended to be slow moving because of primitive transportation and supply systems and because campaigning was usually limited to seasons of mild weather. Armies often went into "winter quarters," a practice that prevailed at least through the time of the American Civil War.

In terms of strategy, the art of the general was limited to rather narrow confines, that is, primarily to the battlefield itself. Certainly logistics were a concern, but the primary interest centered on the battlefield, and by extension to the practice field where discipline was instilled and linear movements mastered. To be sure, the vagaries of international politics were important, particularly in choosing one's allies and limiting one's enemies. But the horizons of the strategist were limited and the process of making strategy was relatively simple by modern standards. Often international political considerations and battlefield strategies were the province of a single person, the "warrior king." Frederick the Great is an excellent example of this phenomenon, as is Napoleon. As we shall see, however, the strategist's task soon become so complex that specialists were required to divide the work load.

Foundations of Modern Warfare

The American and French revolutions near the end of the eighteenth century returned ideology and its passions to warfare. Although the American Revolution preceded its French counterpart, it was probably less significant in its immediate effect on warfare. The American Revolution was a relatively small affair in a remote corner of the eighteenth-century world. Further, it did not generate the mass emotionalism of the French Revolution. Historians

estimate that only about one-third of Americans actively supported the revolution, about one-third opposed it, and one-third were neutral.

The French Revolution, on the other hand, was a massive upheaval in the center of Western civilization. It aroused fierce passions and changed the face of warfare. In defending its revolution from reactionary foreign monarchies, France became a nation in arms with a large army recruited from the masses and motivated by the passions of popular nationalism. Napoleon later harnessed popular nationalism for his purposes and was thus able to field huge armies and to replace fearsome losses with recruits supplied by a nation dedicated to little more than support of its army.

The American and French revolutions gave the common man a cause he considered worth dying for in battle. They were crucial steps on the road to modern total war. However, another revolution, the industrial revolution, had effects of at least equal importance.

One of the first effects wrought by the industrial revolution was the mechanization of transportation by the advent of steam power and the development of railroads. In the United States, the impact of rail transport on warfare was first felt in a major way during the Civil War. Railroads made rapid transport of mass armies over great distances possible and allowed these deployed armies to be supplied efficiently. The strategists' horizons expanded beyond the narrow confines of individual battlefields to encompass whole theaters of operations, and sometimes extended to several widely separated theaters.

Railroads, combined with mass armies, also effectively ended the era of the "decisive" battle as the determiner of a war's outcome. Previously, wars had often consisted of little more than one or two large pitched battles after which the defeated side sued for peace. Because railroads allowed rapid reinforcement or replacement of defeated forces, they made any one victory or defeat less decisive. Thus, the Civil War

proceeded for four years in spite of many major battles, any of which might previously have been decisive.

The construction, maintenance, and operation of an effective railroad system also required a large industrial capacity, the resources to feed that industry, and considerable technical expertise in rail operations. The strategist was again forced to broaden his horizons, this time to include such "nonmilitary" considerations as the mobilization and operation of the nation's industrial infrastructure.

Other products of the industrial revolution also changed the face of war. For example, the minié ball (named after the French inventor Claude Étienne Minié) solved the long-standing problem of loading rifled muskets quickly and with its development rifled weapons became the standard for Civil War infantry. Rifled weapons provided far greater accuracy and vastly increased effective ranges when compared with smoothbore muskets, a circumstance with far-reaching implications. The rifle spelled the end of rigid linear tactics and forced infantry to "go to ground" for survival. Greater accuracy at long range meant increased casualties, placing greater emphasis on medical services and increasing the need for an efficient replacement system. More replacements strained the troop training system as well as the logistical system, including the industrial production required to equip new soldiers. Breech-loading weapons were also used during the Civil War (although generally not as standard issue), which increased the average rate of fire and placed greater strain on logistical systems and industrial capacity.

All of these factors led to the establishment of layers of subordinate commands to control mass armies and the proliferation of specialized staffs to provide technical expertise. The Prussians first recognized the need for superior staff work and, during the Napoleonic Wars, established a general staff system that, with later modifications, became the envy of the Western world. Other nations followed suit, to one degree or another, but few equaled the system of education

and training developed by Prussian military reformers led by Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Augustus von Gneisenau, and Carl von Clausewitz and later perfected by Helmuth von Moltke. Not only had the horizons of the strategist expanded, but now the number of those involved in making strategy or influencing strategic decisions had expanded. The development of the internal combustion engine magnified the changes in the process of making strategy. On land it led to the development of the tank, which revolutionized land warfare. At sea the internal combustion engine (combined with the efficient storage battery) was crucial to the development of submarines, which revolutionized war at sea. And, of course, the gasoline engine was the key ingredient needed to take warfare into the air (balloons had been used, but only to a limited degree and with limited success). War became even more mechanized, reemphasizing the importance of such factors as industrial capacity and natural resources.

By itself, the advent of air power complicated the strategists' world, forcing them to think in three dimensions. As it developed, air power also meant that the home front, the center of industrial production needed to sustain modern mechanized military forces, could be attacked directly. Suddenly, the home front was on the front line and had to be protected, yet another worry for the strategist.

Contrasts in the Nuclear Age

The development of nuclear weapons at the end of World War II brought the trend toward total war to its logical extreme. The so-called weapons of mass destruction were so potent that many believed they would never be used in an all-out war between two nuclear-armed major powers. The costs to both sides in such a struggle would be far greater than the value of any possible objective – or so it seemed. The fact that such weapons existed and could not be "uninvented" meant that their use had to be deterred, and the only deterrent

available was a usable arsenal of nuclear weapons ready for retaliation should the enemy strike.

To complicate the matter further, in the age of air power and intercontinental ballistic missiles, the threat of attack was only minutes away. Unlike any other time in American history, large standing military forces ready for immediate use were required in peacetime. The strategist was now fully engaged in peacetime as well as wartime and was as concerned with preventing war as with waging it. Moreover, the strategist was faced with an overwhelmingly important question that could not be answered with any degree of certainty. Could a major war be prevented from escalating to a full-scale nuclear confrontation?

At least partially due to the uncertain answer to the escalation question, the post-World War II era has become another age of limited war, somewhat reminiscent of the eighteenth century. Post-World War II conflicts have been fought by the major powers on a limited scale for limited objectives and have not been fought directly against each other for fear of escalation. However, restraint on the part of the major powers has not necessarily meant restraint on the part of those lesser states that have fought the major powers. For example, the North Vietnamese waged a war against the United States and South Vietnam that was limited only by their means, not by their objectives or commitment. The same has been true of the Afghans fighting the Soviets. The reversal of the 200-year trend toward total war has further complicated and frustrated life for the strategists of the major powers as they contend with the problem of achieving difficult military objectives with self-restrained force against fully committed and intractable foes, while at the same time maintaining the forces need to deter (or, if required, prosecute) larger and more desperate struggles.

The modern strategist must also cope with a breathtaking rate of technological change, a rate that gives every indication of continuing to accelerate. The struggle to use available

technology effectively or to cope effectively with the enemy's technology has become increasingly complex. Further, modern military forces have become so dependent on high-technology weapon systems that vast research and development programs have become essential parts of modern great power strategies. No one, it seems, can afford to fall behind in the never-ending race for technological advantage.

On the other hand, it has also become increasingly apparent that technology does not always provide appropriate solutions to military problems. Clever strategies can and have overcome superior technology. The so-called military reformers became prominent in the US military in the late 1970s and thereafter by capitalizing on and extending this issue. Taking note of the high cost (and consequently limited numbers) of high-technology weapons, they have called into question the American concept of offsetting superior enemy numbers (quantity) with superior technology (quality). They claim that "quantity has a quality all its own." Reflecting on the Vietnam experience, they question whether an American officer corps trained and educated to rely on high-technology weapons can counter clever strategies.

The cost of high-technology weaponry highlights another problem with which strategists must deal. As liberal democracies have adopted policies promoting social welfare, greater and greater demands have been placed on the financial resources of the state. Military funding requests must now compete with compelling requests for funding in other areas of public interest. This situation complicates the quality versus quantity question and forces the strategist to make difficult decisions and tradeoffs.

Thus, as the twentieth century draws to a close, modern strategists have a very full plate. Their horizons have expanded from the narrow confines of the battlefield to encompass a multitude of human endeavors. The spectrum of conflict with which they must cope has expanded in two directions, upward

toward nuclear Armageddon and downward to the shadow war of the guerrilla, the insurgent, and the terrorist. Strategists are beset by competing ideas about how military forces should be used, their importance relative to other national priorities, and the complexities of technological advancement.

The function of the military strategist, however, is exactly the same as it was in the time of Frederick the Great, as, in fact, it has always been. Strategists have always struggled, with greater or lesser degrees of success, to overcome the problems involved in marshaling and using military forces to achieve a desired objective while coping with myriad influences, many of which are beyond anyone's control. Only the context of the struggle has changed.

CHAPTER 2

THE STRATEGY PROCESS

In the simplest terms, *strategy* is a plan of action that organizes efforts to achieve objectives. The broad and complex modern context within which the strategist operates, however, means that simple definitions shed little light on the factors that make strategy the most fundamental and most difficult of all military arts. In the modern era, it is much more accurate and descriptive to consider strategy as a complex *decisionmaking process* that connects the ends sought (objectives) with the ways and means of achieving those ends.

During the era of such warrior kings as Frederick the Great and Napoleon, the decisions required to produce strategy were often made by one man. In those relatively simple times, warrior kings could grasp and decide issues ranging from the broadest political direction of the nation-state to the most detailed battlefield tactics. They controlled a large vertical slice of their national command structure since they were at once absolute chiefs of state and battlefield commanders. The complexity of the modern context virtually eliminates the possibility of one person's having the ability to grasp all facets of a situation. Further, the decline of absolute monarchies (and warrior kings) in the international system has meant that no one person is in a position to exercise such complete power, particularly in the liberal democracies. The result is that strategy is now made by different people or groups with different perspectives at different levels of authority.

The modern strategy process (in both theory and successful practice) consists of at least five fundamental, interconnected, and sequential steps or decisions that define and shape strategy at each level of authority. The steps range from broad

and occasionally abstract decisions about national objectives to narrow and concrete decisions concerning battlefield tactics. Between those two extremes are three other decisionmaking steps that we refer to as grand strategy, military strategy, and operational strategy.

Step 1 – Determining National Security Objectives

Just as it is difficult to score a bull's-eye without a target, it is also difficult to devise a successful plan of action unless one knows the objective of that plan. The first task of the strategist is to define the national security objectives that form the foundation of the strategy process. If the objectives are ill-defined, inconsistent, or unsupported by some degree of national consensus, the strategist's function becomes exceedingly difficult.

American objectives in World War II provide an excellent example of well-defined, consistent, and widely supported objectives. The United States (and, in varying degrees, its Allies) sought the surrender of the Axis powers – not just any surrender but total and unconditional surrender. Such a stark objective formed a solid foundation on which to base strategy decisions, a fact underscored by the straightforward instruction given to Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower to enter the continent of Europe and destroy the German armed forces. In the postwar years, the advent of nuclear weapons, the cold war superpower standoff, and the fear of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union have meant that the United States would find it risky to pursue such draconian objectives in any conflict that involved the Soviets, even indirectly.

Since World War II, the broad national security objectives of the United States have revolved around the containment of the Soviets and deterrence of war, particularly nuclear war. Neither of these objectives is overly well defined nor do they

always inspire deep public support. "Contain the Soviets!" does not have the same ring as "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

The first "hot-war" test case for post-World War II objectives was the Korean conflict. Unfortunately, the microlevel objectives (flowing from containment) changed with time and circumstance, causing considerable confusion. In the first months of that struggle, the object was simply to throw the northern invaders out of South Korea. After the stunning North Korean defeat following the Inchon landings, the objective expanded to include the liberation of North Korea and the unification of the Korean peninsula. US and UN forces rolled north toward Red China's border prompting the Chinese to enter the struggle. Chinese forces then drove US and UN forces back south. With the change of battlefield fortunes came a reversion to the original objective of repelling an invasion of South Korea, this time a Chinese invasion. The eventual result was a stalemate near the original border between the two Koreas and general disenchantment of the American public.

The objective in Korea was, at the very least, inconsistent over time. In Vietnam, the stated objective was consistent, but was poorly explained. As a result, popular support for the war was not deep enough or strong enough to withstand the pressures of a protracted conflict. The stated objective in Vietnam was to maintain an independent, non-Communist South Vietnamese nation. The objective was poorly explained in the sense that large segments of the American population were not convinced of the importance of the objective. Many Americans wondered how US vital interest could be at stake in a former French colony 10,000 miles across the Pacific, one that few Americans had ever heard of before 1960. In addition, there was considerable question as to whether South Vietnam had ever been a "nation" or whether it was simply a convenient creation of the major powers following the French defeat in 1954. There was concern about American support for a regime in Saigon that was clearly authoritarian and corrupt.

On the other hand, those who supported the stated objective were disappointed in the manner in which the war was prosecuted. They clamored for decisive military action while the US government charted a course of graduated military pressure in an attempt to reach a negotiated settlement. The result was a decline in American national will and military morale, ultimately expressed in an almost audible sigh of relief as America's Southeast Asian "crusade" came to an ignominious conclusion.

Both the Korean and Vietnam wars illustrate the difficulty of translating national objectives from the macrolevel to the microlevel in the nuclear age. The experiences also indicate how the fortunes of war can affect objectives and how objectives can affect the fortunes of war. The point remains, however, that a determination of national objectives is the first and most crucial step in the strategy process. Success without clear objectives amounts to little more than bumbling good fortune.

Step 2—Formulating Grand Strategy

After identifying and assessing national objectives, the strategist must determine which instruments of national power are necessary to achieve the objectives and how those instruments are to be used. *Grand strategy* is the art and science of coordinating the development and use of those instruments to achieve national security objectives. Political scientists often refer to grand strategy as *policy.* Although policy is an arguably broader term than this definition of grand strategy, the two terms are often used synonymously.

One should note that the definition of grand strategy includes both development and use of all the instruments of national power (e.g., economic, political, military) *and* the coordination of these instruments in pursuit of an objective. In most cases, significant objectives can be achieved only through the coordinated use of the instruments of power;

without coordination, they can work at cross-purposes. For a nonmilitary example, consider that federal health officials have, for many years, supported programs to discourage the use of tobacco. During many of those same years, federal agricultural programs paid subsidies to tobacco growers. To prevent such self-defeating behavior, grand strategy must assign roles and missions, determine methods to make the assignments mutually supporting, and identify areas of potential conflict.

Grand strategy is the highest level connection and primary interface between nonmilitary instruments of power and the military establishment. This is an important point for at least three reasons. First, grand strategy becomes the focal point for arguments about the utility of military force in international relations. This is particularly important in the nuclear age because the commitment of forces to combat could lead to escalation and unintended superpower confrontation. Second, in a major "conventional" war of any significant duration, the nonmilitary instruments of power must be mobilized in support of the military establishment and its prosecution of the war. Conversely, how a war is prosecuted depends, in large part, on how well the military forces are supported. Third, a "package" approach is required to combat the so-called revolutionary wars in the third world that have become prevalent in the nuclear age. The package is a sophisticated orchestration of political, psychological, economic, and military actions calculated to dry up support for revolutionary insurgents and to destroy their military capability. American efforts in Vietnam, for example, were criticized for purported overreliance on combat operations and lack of attention to pacification efforts (a failure to successfully address the nonmilitary roots of the problem) and for a lack of coordination between military and nonmilitary actions. Critics pointed out that precious little progress was made by building schools and digging wells in a village by day

and then bombing or shelling the same village at night because of suspected enemy activity.

Step 3 – Developing Military Strategy

After selecting the appropriate instruments of national power and assigning their roles and missions, the strategist must focus on specialized strategies for each selected instrument. Of interest in this volume is *military strategy,* the art and science of coordinating the development, deployment, and employment of military forces to achieve national security objectives. This definition includes four particularly significant terms. One should note that *development* and *deployment* do not necessarily denote wartime operations. The development and deployment of forces and an implied or expressed threat that they will be used can lead to the attainment of national objectives. The objective of deterring nuclear attack upon the United States, for example, is based solely on the threat to use developed and deployed retaliatory forces. On the other hand, the definition also includes *employment,* a term that refers explicitly to the ultimate use of forces during hostilities. In this instance, employment refers to the use of forces in a broad, almost national, sense. For example, should a nation's forces be employed as expeditionary forces or for home defense? Will they be offensively or defensively oriented?

Coordinating is perhaps the most important word in the definition. Earlier in this discussion, coordination concerned relationships between instruments of power at the grand strategy level. Coordination at this level refers to relationships within the military instrument of power. All too often in the past, military forces developed and the places they were deployed have been inappropriate for the employment eventually required. Before World War II, the static fortifications comprising the Maginot Line along the Franco-German border became the keystone of French

defense. The crushing expense of its construction and the complacency it fostered delayed modernization of the French army. Unfortunately for the French, highly mobile German units sidestepped the Maginot Line in 1940, slashed deep into rear areas, and rendered the static French fortifications (and their garrisons) impotent. The French failed to coordinate the development and deployment of their forces effectively with the type of employment eventually required. They had not recognized, in a timely manner, the revolution in mobility wrought by the internal combustion engine, particularly in aircraft and armored vehicles. Consequently, the French were not prepared for the war of rapid maneuver waged by their German attackers.

Step 4—Designing Operational Strategy

Military strategy sets in motion the actions required to develop a military force structure (i.e., planning; procuring weapon systems and materiel; and recruiting, training, and sustaining personnel) and then deploys that force structure. These actions should be accomplished based on broad concepts of how these forces will be employed to fulfill the roles and missions assigned by grand strategy.

While military strategy is broad in its scope, *operational strategy* is much narrower and more specific. Operational strategy employs the forces provided by military strategy. We can define operational strategy as the art and science of planning, orchestrating, and directing military campaigns within a theater of operations to achieve national security objectives.

The notion of the military campaign is the key to understanding operational strategy. Campaigns consist of a series of related operations, each of which may involve a number of battles, which taken together seek to achieve a particular objective. An example will illustrate the concept. Perhaps the best-known aerial campaign in the Vietnam War

was Linebacker II, an intensive 11-day bombing campaign conducted in late December 1972. The campaign had a specific politico-military objective. The campaign consisted of discrete daily operations, each of which resulted in a number of battles involving enemy fighters, surface-to-air missiles, and antiaircraft artillery as they engaged waves of American bombers and supporting aircraft.

The word *orchestrating* in the definition is also central to the concept of operational strategy. Orchestrating suggests that within a campaign, the capabilities of various forces must be combined harmoniously to achieve a synergistic relationship. On a broader scale, orchestrating suggests that separate campaigns must be combined in a harmonious fashion to achieve the objectives sought in the larger war.

Fundamental to operational strategy is the development of campaigns appropriate to the situation and the nature of national objectives sought. Strangely, an appropriate operational strategy is not always synonymous with traditional notions of victory. In Vietnam, US forces achieved victory after victory to little avail. In contrast, during the American Revolution, the rebellious colonists won few victories but still achieved independence.

Step 5—Formulating Battlefield Strategy (Tactics)

In spite of clear and attainable national objectives, well-coordinated grand strategy, appropriate military strategy, and a well-designed operational strategy, a nation can still lose on the battlefield. Thus, the last basic step of the strategy process is to formulate and execute battlefield strategy, most commonly known as tactics. *Battlefield strategy* is the art and science of employing forces on the battlefield to achieve national security objectives. The classic differentiation between tactics and higher levels of strategy remains relevant in the sense that tactics govern the use of forces on the

battlefield while grand strategy, military strategy, and operational strategy bring forces to the battlefield. One can also add some clarity to the situation by stating that tactics are concerned with doing the job "right," and higher levels of strategy are concerned with doing the "right" job.

A particularly good example of the importance of proper tactics comes from the air war in World War II. The initial American tactics for daylight precision bombing of Germany involved the use of unescorted bombers. Unexpectedly high losses to German interceptors, particularly during the operations to Schweinfurt in 1943, forced American airmen to suspend operations deep into Germany until they could produce and deploy long-range escort fighters. The United States was fortunate that it had the time and means to correct this tactical error and to reevaluate the doctrine that caused the error.

Influences on the Strategy Process

The preceding discussion outlined a theoretically simple and straightforward process for linking political ends with battlefield means. In reality, however, at least four factors complicate the process. First, the seemingly neat and compartmentalized steps of the process are neither neat nor compartmentalized. They tend to blend and flow from national objectives to tactics. Some writers have coined such intermediate terms as *grand tactics*, *low-level strategy*, and *high-level tactics* in attempts to provide precise descriptions of certain situations. Use of these exacting terms is unnecessary if one bears in mind that the strategy process is a series of interrelated decisions rather than a group of loosely related planning events.

Second, there is a reverse flow or feedback system within the process. Grand strategy, military strategy, operational strategy, and tactics change, at least in part, because of results obtained from the process. The US reaction to losses suffered

in the unescorted bombing missions over Germany is an excellent example of the effects of feedback on the process.

Third, numerous external factors constrict and twist the straight-line flow from national objectives to battlefield tactics. The list of these factors, most of which are totally beyond the control of the strategist, is almost endless and includes, at the very least, such factors as the nature of the threat, domestic and international politics, economics, technology, physical environment and geography, cultural heritage, and military doctrine. Figure 1 graphically portrays the strategy process and the pushing and tugging of outside influences on the process, but it shows only a few of the influences that form the parameters of the situation within which the strategist operates. The importance of any particular influence is situational. For example, economic considerations are highly significant at the grand-strategy step because budget allocations accompany the assignment of roles and missions. In the same manner, economic factors have a heavy impact on military strategy because of the costs involved in developing forces. However, the economic influence on tactics is only indirect.

External influences tend to constrain the number of options at each step of the process. Although economic factors are the most obvious, other influences also limit the strategist's options. One US option in Vietnam, for example, was to use nuclear weapons, but international and domestic political considerations, and perhaps cultural values, effectively precluded nuclear employment.

The fourth factor that complicates the process revolves around the questions of where and by whom decisions are made within the process. Who determines national objectives either in a broad sense or as they pertain to a specific situation? Who determines grand strategy? One might assume grand strategy would be the purview of an organization such as the National Security Council, but is that true? What role does the Congress play in those decisions, particularly given its role in

Figure 1. The Strategy Process.

providing funding? How is military strategy determined? How do the military services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff fit into the process? The same sorts of questions can be asked at the operational strategy level, particularly in relation to joint operations and the integration of allied forces. Problems exist even at the tactical level where one might assume that the commander on the battlefield would make the decisions. Yet in Vietnam, tactics for the air war over North Vietnam were often dictated in the White House.

Continuing the Investigation

This chapter presented a brief overview of the process of making strategy. The process accomplishes the same function

as that performed almost intuitively by the warrior kings of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The process copes with the complex context of the modern age. In the chapters that follow, we examine each element of the process (except tactics) in much greater detail, beginning with the political dimension of the process—national objectives and grand strategy.

SECTION II

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

CHAPTER 3

GRAND NATIONAL STRATEGY

The term *strategy* is military in derivation and the clearest applications of strategy are in the military realm, but other groups and individuals have appropriated the term as part of their lexicons as well. In particular, the term is associated with the broad set of goals and policies a nation adopts toward the world (akin to the broadest definition and sense of national foreign policy).

In this adaptation, strategy also remains a process relating means to ends, but the means and ends are somewhat different. Grand national strategy is the process by which the nation's basic goals are realized in a world of conflicting goals and values. The ends of grand strategy are usually expressed in terms of national interests. The role of the strategy process is to translate those national interests into means for achieving those ends. Those means, in turn, are traditionally described in terms of the instruments of national power. They are usually categorized as the political (or diplomatic), economic, and military instruments of power.

Grand national strategy thus emerges as the process by which the appropriate instruments of power are arrayed and employed to accomplish the national interest. Thus, the building blocks of grand national strategy are the goals or national interests that are to be served and the instruments that may be used to serve those ends.

Vital National Interests

The idea of a vital national interest is unique to the sphere of international politics, and it is a term which is commonly

defined by two characteristics. The first characteristic is that a vital interest is one on which the nation is unwilling to compromise. By illustration, territorial integrity is a matter on which the United States would not willingly compromise; we would not, if we have any choice in the matter, cede any part of American soil. The second characteristic is related – a vital interest is one over which a nation would go to war. Thus, if someone claimed a portion of American soil, not only would we refuse to compromise our claim, we would fight to guarantee our retention.

Vital interests normally do not exist within domestic society, but only within the relations (international politics) between sovereign nation-states. The international system has no peaceful mechanism to resolve matters that are vital to its members, nor does it have mechanisms to enforce community will when vital interests clash. The reason, of course, is that since nations believe that some things are so important that they cannot be compromised, they want neither the mechanisms that might reach compromising decisions nor the mechanisms to enforce compromises. Instead, in the international realm, nations prefer to attempt to maintain maximum control over their vital interests, up to and including the use of organized armed force to protect or promote those interests.

Like all other states, the United States has a variety of interests, some of which are more important than others and some of which are amenable to promotion in different manners. Donald Nuechterlein,* in a number of works, has provided a useful way of distinguishing between various interests. His framework is shown in figure 2.

In this depiction, "Intensity of Interest" refers to how important a given interest is to the United States, the highest level of intensity is to the left of the heavy vertical line, and the

*Donald Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985).

lowest is to the right. The heavy vertical line between the categories of "Vital" and "Major" indicates the point where the criteria of vital interests come into play. "Basic Interest at Stake" refers to categories of substantive interest, which are arranged in roughly descending order.

	Intensity of Interest			
Basic Interest at Stake	Survival	Vital	Major	Peripheral
Defense of Homeland				
Economic Well-being				
Favorable World Order				
Promotion of Values				

Figure 2. National Interest Matrix.

The notion of intensity of interest is basic here, and its categories require definition. According to Nuechterlein, a survival interest exists when the physical existence of a country is in jeopardy due to attack or threat of attack. Clearly, this is the most basic interest the state has. If a state cannot survive, no other interest matters. For the United States, this means avoiding nuclear devastation by the Soviet Union, in reality the only direct threat to our survival. The strategy problem is how to avoid this circumstance (the subject of chapter 9).

The second level of intensity is vital interest, which Nuechterlein says are circumstances when serious harm to the nation would result unless strong measures, including the use of force, are employed to protect the interest. A dramatic (and not altogether implausible) example would be the coming to power of a Castroite government in Mexico. A more commonly employed example is the Soviet threat to America's closest allies, such as those in NATO and Northeast Asia.

Before proceeding to the other levels of intensity, note that protection of survival and vital interests is not always nor necessarily compatible and may, indeed, be contradictory. The clearest example of contradiction occurs when protecting a vital interest jeopardizes survival. For instance, defense of NATO Europe could entail the use of nuclear weapons, and nuclear exchange could escalate to a homeland exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union that would threaten the existence of both. Conversely, if the Soviets believe that the subjugation of Western Europe is vital to them, they face the same dilemma, since attaining that end would also involve the risk of a survival-threatening nuclear escalation.

The third level of interest is major interests, which are situations where a country's political, economic, or social well-being may be adversely affected but where the use of armed force is not deemed necessary to avoid adverse outcomes. The fourth level of interest is peripheral interests, which are situations where some national interest is involved but where the nation as a whole is not particularly affected by any given outcome.

The most difficult and contentious determination is between vital and major interests. Since the demarcation line Nuechterlein draws represents the distinction between what the nation should and should not defend with armed force, the location of the line can be argued to be the most basic item in the debate about national defense. Indeed, in the difficult debates about defense policy, defense spending, and the like, one can get a rather clear understanding of various viewpoints by knowing on which side of the line participants place different situations. There is little real disagreement over which interests are absolutely essential (deterring nuclear war, for example), but there are matters of honest difference between political actors about how best to achieve goals (in other words, differences over appropriate strategies).

Similarly, there is general agreement on the least important, most peripheral matters.

As noted, it is the junction point between vital and major interests that is the problem and this is understandable. In these situations, interests are at stake and, by definition, various outcomes do make a difference to the United States. Policy disagreements tend to be about how much difference the various outcomes make, and thus what one should be prepared to do to protect these interests.

The situations in the Persian Gulf and Central America illustrate this tension and difference, if in varying ways. President Jimmy Carter, in a portion of his 1980 State of the Union Address only three weeks after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, declared free transit through the Persian Gulf and access to Persian Gulf oil to be vital American interests. What became known as the Carter Doctrine declared that the United States would defend its access to the gulf with armed force if that access was threatened. As a result, American naval vessels now routinely patrol the gulf and are stationed nearby in the Arabian Sea.

But is the Persian Gulf vital to the United States? Certainly the gulf is important in that some of the oil we need passes through it, and both our economic well-being and vision of a favorable world order would be compromised by certain political outcomes in the region. But does that constitute reason enough to use US armed force in the region? What the American public thinks about the vitality of the region and thus ultimate US commitment is not entirely clear.

The Central American, and especially the Nicaraguan, situation is a similar and even more lively situation. There is general agreement that American interests in the area would be better served by a Nicaraguan government other than that of the Sandinistas (although there is no universal agreement as to who should constitute that government). The questions that divide the political spectrum are: How much of a problem do the Marxist Sandinistas create for their neighbors and for

us? And hence what should we be prepared to do about the Nicaraguan situation? Few would argue that the situation is so intolerable that the United States should contemplate direct military intervention (declare the situation a clear and compelling vital interest). Rather, the debate is over whether we should give military support to the United Nicaraguan Opposition (the Contras), thereby placing the situation astride Nuechterlein's line, or not, placing the situation in the major interest category.

Because direct defense of territorial assets has not been a major US requirement since World War II, a great concern has been determining which external situations post threats to basic US interests. In the twentieth century, the existence of a Europe not controlled by a hostile power or powers has been identified as an imperative objective. The US military instrument of power has been employed twice in combat to that end, and the quest for European security has led to the grand national strategy of containment since the 1940s. Northeast Asia (Japan and Korea) has also been considered vital to US interests since 1945. The fact that American security interests are primarily foreign adds a special character and source of contention in the formulation of US grand national strategy. With the direct (if ultimate) threat to American territory limited to the nuclear case, the primary roles assigned to American forces (the threats to which those forces must prepare to respond) are expeditionary defenses against foreign powers posing an indirect threat to the achievement of basic American goals. This fact creates an imperative for strategic and force development not required in countries whose military forces are primarily or exclusively concerned with territorial defense (e.g., Poland has no need for a rapid deployment force), but it also causes disagreement. Expenditure and sacrifice for direct homeland defense is a far less contentious idea (although people may disagree about the levels of effort needed) than is the less immediate, more abstract notion that a situation in some distant land poses a

vital threat. For instance, the necessity of American participation in the Vietnam conflict would have been much easier to "sell" if the US government had been able to argue credibly that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong would next head for San Diego harbor.

The extended, expeditionary nature of American security objectives gives rise to a more significant debate over what security objectives should be than would otherwise be the case. Isolationism (the conscious attempt to withdraw from international involvement) is a stronger impulse in American culture than in cultures more directly threatened. The degree to which American vital interests are threatened in any given geographical area is the source of considerable division within the United States because of the physical remoteness of many areas of interest. The United States is not unique in this regard. British debate over involvement in continental European affairs during the period when the English Channel effectively shielded the United Kingdom from direct territorial peril provides a parallel example.

The remoteness of many of the areas of interest to the United States makes the debate over whether interests are vital or major/peripheral more lively and affects the debate over the relative national emphasis on security and nonsecurity goals. By definition, interests deemed vital require military resources if the gap between threat and capability (risk) is to be narrowed. Providing the required resources usually comes at the expense of other demands for resources, such as those associated with social programs. If the same interests are designated as major or peripheral, the pressure to divert resources to military ends disappears because, in risk terms, assaults on major or peripheral interests represent a smaller threat.

This competition is important because of the reciprocal relationship between grand strategy objectives and the means available to carry them out. To some extent, ends must be determined by available means and risks must be borne.

National objectives exceed resources available to fulfill them and thus are contentious in the sense that various people order them differently in the competition for resources. Advocacy of different objectives is always spirited and generally stated in terms of absolute need.

The post-Vietnam debate of the 1970s over defense can be seen in these terms. Part of that debate centered on what objectives should be pursued: where and in what situations is an American ability to project power necessary and proper? At the same time, a perceived erosion in defense capabilities, particularly relative to the Soviet Union, raised questions about American ability to meet security objectives. The Reagan administration entered office committed to the proposition that then current spending levels did not provide the wherewithal to meet legitimate objectives. It secured a large military funding increase to reduce what it considered intolerable levels of risk. By the middle 1980s, the resulting buildup had arguably reduced risk considerably, but public and congressional concern about huge budget deficits and their consequences had fueled yet another debate over relative spending priorities.

The degree of external threat and public willingness to respond to differing levels of threat are additional sources of friction that affect perceptions about vital interests. The two problems are, of course, related and sequential. If people recognize a high degree of threat, their willingness to combat it is likely to be high. But, since the direct threat to basic American values is limited to the nuclear case, the credibility of other threats is ambiguous and debatable. It is one thing, for instance, to argue the need for a credible deterrent against Soviet nuclear aggression; it is quite another proposition to argue that, in the absence of some prescribed level of military vigilance, the Soviet army would occupy Hoboken. In the first case, the threat is to survival and is unambiguous and recognized. Thus, avoiding its consequences is an objective with which grand national strategy must come to grips

(although people can and do argue vehemently about appropriate military strategies, tactics, and deployments necessary to achieve the objective). In the second case, there is ample room for disagreement. Few people doubt that the Soviets wish the United States less than well, but the nature and degree of their malevolence and the extent to which their animosity translates into a direct assault on core American goals are more conjectural. This ambiguity nurtures honest disagreement about American strategic posture toward the Soviet threat.

The translation of basic national interests into objectives leading to formulation of grand national strategy and factors influencing that translation can be exemplified. Since the late 1940s, American grand national strategy has been containment of communism. The core assumption of the strategy is that Soviet-dominated Communist states should not be allowed to spread beyond the boundaries established at the end of World War II because further spread would eventually pose a direct threat to the United States. Originally devised for and applied to the power balance in Europe, the basic containment formulation has been extended to encompass the Sino-Soviet periphery, although the primary author of the strategy, George F. Kennan, has denied that this extension was his intent. The effect of containment is to draw a line on the map and to declare that forced change outside that line is a threat to American interests. Whether those interests at any specific place are vital (so that the United States would personally defend them) or merely major (in which case our support would be more limited) has been an ongoing source of debate.

Although there has been disagreement about the operational implications of containment and the extent to which the United States should enforce the containment line, there has been remarkable consensus for containment in the postwar period. During the so-called cold war and into the 1960s, this support was explicit and forthright.

Disillusionment with application of the strategy in Southeast Asia and perception that detenté was moderating US-Soviet relations resulted in less explicit references to containment as basic strategy through the middle 1970s. Burgeoning Soviet defense expenditures and third world adventurism, however, have led to a revival of explicit support of the concept in the early 1980s.

Regardless of the nature of the acceptance of containment as the guiding principle of American grand national strategy, there has always been disagreement about the best way to achieve it (a question of what is or is not the national interest). Discussion of the means to implement containment policy moves us a step down the strategy model to the instruments of power and the strategies used to employ them. (Elements dealing primarily with the military instrument of power are covered in later chapters and do not require detailed consideration here.) The interplay between the instruments of power helps to define what grand strategy is and is not.

Instruments of National Power

In conventional terms, the instruments are generally placed in a threefold classification. The *military instrument* refers to the extent to which a nation's armed forces can be employed (or have their employment threatened) to achieve national ends. The *economic instrument* refers to the application of a nation's material resources in achieving those ends. The *diplomatic* (or *political*) *instrument* refers to the ways the international political position and diplomatic skills of the nation-state can be brought to bear in pursuit of national interest. Each instrument is applied for the same purpose: to achieve outcomes that serve the national interest.

A range of employment strategies accompanies each instrument. The potential use of the military instrument, even when its application is not threatened, always lurks in the background to condition international relationships. The

potential for thermonuclear confrontation, for instance, serves as a conditioner in US-Soviet relations that forces the two superpowers to treat one another more carefully than would be the case in its absence. At the same time armed forces can be employed in a variety of other ways to influence events. Some employments are relatively mild and are more symbolic than substantial, as in the movement of naval forces into waters adjacent to a local conflict to indicate support for a particular regime. Depending on the objectives and the perceived level of threat, more active strategies include providing arms to combatants, assigning technical or combat advisers, and intervening in hostilities. The ultimate application, of course, is direct involvement in combat in support of (by definition) vital interests.

The economic instrument also takes varied forms, and the extent to which it can be employed depends greatly on the country's economic resources. In this regard, much of the concern over declines in American national power in the 1970s and 1980s was at least implicitly a commentary on the relative strength of the US economy within the global economic system. As the world's leading industrial nation (if the European Economic Community is not treated as a unit), the United States has considerably more economic tools than most of the developing world or, for that matter, the Soviet Union, which is itself a developing country in economic terms.

The economic instrument is more explicitly amenable to the "carrot-and-stick" approach than other instruments. Hence, economic assistance or preferential trade relationships can be used as positive inducements (carrot) to produce desired behavior, and the threat of withholding aid or using quotas or tariffs to disadvantage trade can be a sanction (stick) if another country does not take desired actions. The same strategy can be applied in other economic areas, such as foreign investment policy to encourage or constrain overseas activities of American corporations, and in policies more closely associated with the military instrument, such as arms transfers.

The diplomatic/political instrument is somewhat more derivative and amorphous. Because of the US position as political leader of the Western alliance, its proposals automatically receive more attention and scrutiny than the proposals of a less powerful nation. It is not clear whether US political "clout" derives purely from that position or whether its source is American economic and military strength. What is clear is that diplomatic skill can help turn events in a nation's favor. During the nineteenth century, for instance, the influence of the comparatively weak Hapsburg monarchy in Austria-Hungary was largely the result of the diplomatic brilliance of foreign minister Count von Metternich. The ability to mediate successfully and to produce unique and mutually acceptable solutions to complex issues without application of military or economic power is the essence of the diplomatic instrument.

These instruments, of course, are not available in a vacuum. The extent to which a nation has military might, economic resources, or skilled diplomats is one source of limitation, but democratic societies have other constraints, particularly in domestic affairs. For constitutional, statutory, and political reasons, the president of the United States cannot exercise the military instrument with impunity in support of the containment strategy. Constitutional entrustment of the power to declare war to the Congress is a limit on such a prerogative, and the War Powers Act of 1973 places statutory limitations on presidential ability to employ American forces in combat in situations where war is not declared (the United States has not engaged in a declared war since World War II). Politically, the need for public support further constrains the president.

The economic instrument has similar constraints. The degree to which the US government can manipulate economic assistance is limited by the comparatively small and static size of its assistance budget. Foreign aid has been described as a budgetary element with no real domestic constituency and, as

a result, it has not grown with inflation (meaning its real value has declined). In addition, manipulation of trade relationships is constrained by domestic considerations. For example, providing favorable trade terms for such items as foreign automobiles is likely to hurt domestic industries and cause internal resistance; and restrictions on trade, such as the grain embargo to the Soviet Union following its invasion of Afghanistan, are likely to result in selective domestic sacrifices deemed unfair. In the same vein, the government cannot order private US firms to invest in particular countries, nor can it completely control their activities if they do invest. The complexities in applying the economic instrument and to what ends are well illustrated by the ongoing debate over American private participation in South Africa. The poles in that debate are punishment through divestiture and participation to bring about reform through so-called constructive engagement.

Several other factors complicate the task of developing strategies for particular instruments. First, the instruments are highly interrelated and thus cannot be viewed in isolation. In modern warfare, for instance, military success or failure depends to a large degree on the national economic, technological, and industrial base and the extent to which that base can be mobilized and applied to the war effort. At the same time, military spending is a significant part of the American economy, and the nation's economic health depends to some degree on diplomatic skill in negotiating favorable trade agreements with foreign governments. To complete the circle, diplomatic success depends on activities that can be backed up by economic and military rewards or sanctions. In other words, treating the various instruments of power in isolation oversimplifies reality.

Second, each of the instruments of power is, in fact, a combination of multiple factors, and any one factor can be crucial in a given situation. It is difficult, for example, to identify any single index of military power that allows prediction of a clash between two reasonably equal, or even

not so equal foes, because so many factors comprise military prowess. In addition to such obvious factors as the amount of manpower and firepower available to any contestant, numerous other influences may prove critical. Some of these factors are tangible, such as the length and security of supply lines; and others are more difficult to measure precisely, such as morale, leadership, strategic and tactical soundness, compatibility between physical capabilities and political objectives, and sheer luck. To a great extent, military history is a chronicle of calculation and miscalculation in comparing military instruments and their capacities to serve national ends.

Third, one may speak analytically about the individual instruments of power and their use in various strategies, but, in application, some combination of instruments usually must be brought to bear, often in an ad hoc rather than a planned manner. This complex intertwining occurs for two related reasons. On one hand, any given situation may involve multiple objectives with political, economic, and military/security dimensions and different strategies may be necessary for the various aspects. The extent and mix of actions employing one or more instruments of power will vary depending on the situation. On the other hand, situations evolve over time; thus, an appropriate strategy at one point may be forced to yield to another strategy at a different point. The situation in the Persian Gulf illustrates the first factor and the Iranian hostage crisis is a good example of the second factor.

As already noted, President Carter deemed the guarantee of continuing access to Persian Gulf petroleum reserves vital to American security interest, a judgment accepted by the Reagan administration and reiterated by the president in 1987. Addition of the gulf area to the containment line has dictated strategies for the various instruments of power. The implications for the military instrument, particularly in light of Soviet troops being only 300 miles from the gulf in

Afghanistan, have fueled the urgency for having the Rapid Deployment Force, have made necessary a permanent station for a new carrier flotilla in the Indian Ocean, and have accelerated military assistance for Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the Iranian revolution has required the United States to look for alternative political "allies" in the region. The ongoing Iran-Iraq War, and especially its extension to attacks on oil tankers entering or leaving the ports of the belligerents, has created additional requirements for naval patrols, escorts, and defense as well as air cover.

The Iranian hostage crisis illustrated both the interrelation of the various instruments and emphasis on one or another at different stages. Diplomatic activities were conducted throughout the period that American personnel were held captive, but they were muted and highly secret. Initially, the economic instrument of power was applied through such actions as levying a trade embargo and freezing Iranian financial assets in the United States. When that pressure failed to secure the hostages' release, the military instrument was applied in the unsuccessful raid at Desert One in late spring 1980. Finally, diplomatic efforts heavily assisted by Algerian intermediaries secured the release, although the effects of the economic sanctions and Iranian need for money and spare parts to continue prosecuting the war with Iraq had a considerable impact.

The fourth factor that complicates strategymaking for particular instruments of power is the fact that different countries are predisposed by culture, history, and circumstance to prefer greater or lesser reliance on different instruments of power. During the heyday of British power, the United Kingdom sought to rely primarily on diplomatic skill to maintain a balance of power conducive to British commercial interests on the European continent (a preference influenced by a relatively small British population and cultural aversion to maintaining a peacetime standing army). The Soviet Union relies heavily on the military

instrument partly because of its experience with foreign invaders and a weak Soviet economy that restricts its economic leverage. The United States has historically emphasized the economic instrument, reflecting a preeminent economic system and an aversion dating back to the American Revolution to maintaining a large peacetime military force.

Fifth and finally, the relative emphasis placed on different instruments of power fluctuates with time. In recent years, for instance, it has been fashionable in the United States and Western Europe to derogate military power as a means of realizing foreign policy objectives. Partly as a result of the Vietnam experience and partly as a result of the tremors created by the various oil "shocks" and skyrocketing energy costs, emphasis has shifted to something called economic interdependence. Advocates of interdependence argue that the world's nations are becoming so inextricably tied to one another through burgeoning trade in energy and mineral resources and in agricultural and industrial goods that no nation remains self-sufficient in any meaningful way. Nations must cooperate to survive since hostilities with virtually any rival risk cutoff of vital goods. Nation-states are forced to cooperate from fear of the consequences of not doing so, much as fear of mutual vaporization forces some level of US-Soviet cooperation. The argument for interdependence suggests the relative rise of the economic instrument among the tools of power, and its champions optimistically suggest that once cooperative patterns become widespread, they may become the norm. Such an outcome would, of course, diminish the role of military force considerably.

There is evidence, however, of a growing awareness that interdependence has a darker, more Machiavellian side in which the military instrument plays a potentially greater role. This construct suggests that mutual dependence does not necessarily lead to cooperation because one nation can withhold or threaten to withhold vital resources to put another nation at its mercy. Under such conditions, the only way to

ensure access to vital materials may be the resort to force. The "Carter Doctrine" regarding the Persian Gulf is testimony of this concern. Concerns about the future of mineral-rich southern Africa and the ability of the relatively new Soviet blue-water navy to interdict shipping lanes vital to the United States and its allies are similar indicators. In other words, the realization that interdependence is a double-edged sword may lead to shifting perceptions about the relative importance of the various instruments of national power.

Summary and Conclusion

As the preceding discussion has suggested, grand national strategymaking is a process of determining what interests the nation has, what priorities to place on various interests, and what national instruments of power are available, appropriate, and acceptable for achieving individual interests and the aggregate of those interests. The process is inevitably political because it involves public policy choices about the relative interests that are at stake, their intensity, and the risks each involves. This determination is always contentious, especially in the gray areas separating interests that are vital from those of a lower level of intensity. This distinction is especially important for the military strategist because the location of the line between vital and lesser interests defines where the military will and will not ply its trade.

The number of vital interests a state has influences the reliance it places on military as opposed to other instruments of national power. At the same time, the availability of certain kinds and amounts of power may place limits on the interests that a nation can pursue. A small, developing state, for instance, cannot define its vital interests in global terms because it lacks the military means to prosecute them. At the other extreme, the United States and the Soviet Union possess such excessive military (e.g., nuclear) power that they are

precluded from pursuing some interests against each other for fear that their power will be activated.

Thus, matching the instruments of power to the interests of the state is a primary task of the strategymaker. What those interests are and what instruments will exist to pursue those interests are matters of public policy choices. The choices are made in the political realm, where decisions are made about what scarce resources are allocated to what ends. The discussion in the next two chapters looks at the "political dimension" and how it affects strategy, beginning with the political environment and then moving to the actors and institutions in the political realm.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF GRAND STRATEGY

There is a widely held misconception that military affairs, and more specifically the making of military strategy, are somehow divorced from politics. Included in the image is a notion that the association of politics, which is viewed as impure, taints and compromises the professionalism that underlies the military art and science.

This unfortunate misconception reflects an extremely narrow view of politics. If politics is viewed broadly as the ways in which conflicts of interest concerning scarce resources are resolved, the relationship between politics and military power is intimate and reciprocal. Obviously, application of military power is one of the ways that conflicts can be resolved. The absence of more formal means of conflict resolution that marks the international system often dictates that the military instrument of power is *the* means by which conflicts are resolved.

Put a slightly different way, the reasons for using military power are politically determined. Military strategy is very much an ends-means relationship in which the ends are politically mandated and defined. The role of the strategist is to determine proper ways to apply military force to achieve those political ends. "War," as the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz put it clearly, "is the continuation of politics by other means." Its objective, to borrow from the British strategist Sir Basil Liddell Hart, is to create "a better state of the peace" and that better state is invariably defined in terms of maintaining or altering the political relationship between the adversaries.

This construction of the relationship between military activity and politics is essentially noncontroversial and unobjectionable because it leaves the military profession relatively free of association with the day-to-day manifestations of partisan politics and politicians. It fits well within the American tradition of a highly apolitical military establishment. It is when the notion of politics moves from the so-called high road just described to the low road of partisan politics that a taint begins to appear. The low road connotes smoke-filled rooms, highly partisan activity, and even shady dealings.

Understanding strategy requires a more sophisticated understanding of the political environment in which strategy is made and carried out. Military affairs are influenced by as well as have influence on politics. At the most obvious level, the political process determines how much money is available in the defense budget, and thus what military capabilities are available to carry out what strategies. At the same time, the amount and kind of military force available constrain or create opportunities to realize various political purposes, usually defined in terms of various national interests.

Since strategy is not made in a vacuum but within the political context, that context must be understood if good strategy is to result. To that end, this chapter essentially explores two sets of political factors. The first of these is a series of influences from the political realm. Following that discussion, we move to the influence of the strategic culture and how it is influenced by history and the nation's geography.

Influences on Grand Strategy

Viewed broadly, grand national strategy formulation occurs in the context of setting American foreign policy objectives. As a political process aimed at resolving differences and achieving ends, grand strategymaking resembles other policy areas; that is, the same patterns of legislative-executive

interaction and bureaucratic maneuvering are present in agriculture or energy policy as are involved in national security policy. At the same time, the nature of grand national strategy involves some unique influences not present in other areas.

At least six characteristics influence the grand strategy process in the United States: security policy is potentially fundamental in its effects; its objectives are external rather than domestic; its objectives are generally negative rather than positive; it has a basically conservative bias; its problems and solutions are often highly technical; and it is more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the budgetary process than other areas of public policy. Each of these factors affect the design of strategy and its content; collectively, these factors help define the milieu for strategymaking. The reason for delineating these characteristics is neither to celebrate nor decry their existence; rather it is to recognize the limitations they present to the strategist.

Fundamental Nature

The first characteristic is the fundamental nature of grand national strategy. National security policy has as its primary objective protecting the country from those who would do it harm (national existence or survival interests as described in chapter 3). Since physical protection from devastation or subjugation is the most basic national interest, the purposes of national security policy are universal in nature in the sense that they affect everyone. If they are tested, every citizen, especially in a nuclear world, has a stake in them. This universality, and the fact that implementation of security policies is inevitably an expensive proposition, injects a breadth of interest and emotional quality into debates about national security that is absent in, for instance, forestry and fisheries policy.

This universality and its life-and-death quality cut both ways in the public debate. At one level, it is difficult for all but a tiny

minority to oppose openly a vigorous and robust national security policy and grand strategy because of the stakes. At another level, the expense of modern military engagement, both in blood and treasure, gives pause about where and when employment of the military instrument of power is appropriate. The resulting contention usually concerns where the boundary between vital and less-than-vital interests should be located.

External Objectives

The second characteristic influencing the grand-strategy process is that national security policy leading to formulation of such strategy is generally directed toward foreign problems rather than domestic priorities. This external dimension creates three sources of complication in the strategy process.

The first source concerns knowledge. Foreign governments and their policymakers are the objects of security policy, and strategists and policymakers are likely to have less knowledge about what motivates and influences them than is the case in domestic politics. Rather than using direct means to acquire knowledge about problems and their solutions, US decisionmakers usually have to use such less direct means as intelligence gathering and analysis. These sources inevitably are less than perfect in terms of the information collected and interpretation of imperfect information may be adversely affected by cultural and other biases.

The second source of complication is the fact that national security strategies are directed toward adversaries or potential enemies, not friends and allies. This means that policy options are generally delineated and discussed in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. As a result, assessments of defense policy are made in a contentious atmosphere of presumed hostile intent, where facts are often beclouded and their interpretation is open to varying analyses.

The classic debate over capabilities and intentions illustrates this phenomenon. As a general rule, US intelligence capabilities provide the government with rather precise information on the military capabilities of adversaries, but usually provide only a limited idea about, *why* possess those capabilities (adversaries' intended use for those capabilities). Since armaments can be, and are, possessed for a variety of reasons, determining an adversary's intention is a logical prerequisite to fashioning policies to deflect threats. But with good information about only half of the intentions-capabilities tandem, the problem becomes a dilemma: Can one infer an adversary's intentions from capabilities or must one know the adversary's intentions to make any sense of the capabilities presumably developed to support those purposes? The situation is aggravated by knowledge that any number of intentions can underlie a given capability and that an adversary is not likely to reveal his intentions to the "enemy." To make matters worse, the suspicions that create an adversarial relationship in the first place can result in a tendency to dismiss as propaganda any "enemy" statements of intent that are not totally malevolent.

The third source of difficulty arising from dealing with foreign problems is control. Not only do we not always know the intentions of our adversaries, it is not always possible to anticipate and hence deter actions harmful to our interests. One purpose of strategy is to *influence* foreign governments not to do things harmful to our interests, but we do not *control* events outside our borders. Major uncertainties do arise and cannot always he anticipated and deflected.

Negative Objectives

These uncertainties are compounded by the third influence on strategy—grand strategy has a basically negative purpose. Often, the purpose of national security policy is not so much to promote positive goals as it is to prevent others from

engaging in hostile, harmful actions. There are, of course, situations where policy is intended to promote positive purposes, as in nurturing democratization or economic reform in third world countries. Even then, the reasons underlying positive policies may be negative as in making a society less permeable for Communists. Thus, security policy seeks to keep things from happening, and problems arise in demonstrating the success of a negative policy. If the purpose is to deter hostile action against our interest, we can clearly demonstrate that the policy failed if the adversary carries out the proscribed action. Unfortunately, it is logically impossible to conclude that the failure to carry out the action was the result of our strategy. A state may choose not to act for a variety of reasons, only one of which may be our deterrence strategy. To prove the success of a deterrence strategy requires committing what in formal logic is known as the fallacy of affirming the consequent. An example may clarify this anomaly.

The Soviets maintain massive conventional and nuclear forces (capabilities) that could be used for an invasion of Western Europe and the adversarial relationship between the United States (and its European allies) and the Soviet Union suggests that these forces may be intended for such an attack. The policy problem for the United States and its allies has been to deter the Soviets from carrying out this presumed intent. The policy solution has been the containment strategy implemented by the NATO alliance accompanied by a high degree of military readiness in Europe.

The most important question about containment and the military strategies implementing it is: Has it worked? The Soviets have not invaded NATO countries, but can Soviet failure to do so during the last 40-plus years be attributed to US deterrent policy and force posture? Perversely enough, the question could be answered definitively only if the Soviets invaded Western Europe. In that event, containment policy would obviously have failed.

Since an invasion has not occurred, is it possible to conclude that the containment strategy has been successful? Unfortunately for analysis and evaluation, the answer is no because there are any number of reasons that might explain the Soviets' lack of aggression and US containment strategy is only one. Another explanation might be that the Soviets are simply not interested in conquering and then having to occupy Europe. The point is that, in the absence of direct evidence, we cannot draw a valid conclusion when there is more than one possible explanation.

Conservative Bias

The first three factors combine to create a fourth characteristic—a built-in conservative bias in defense strategymaking. In the absence of definitive knowledge of what motivates adversaries and in view of the potentially cataclysmic results of guessing wrong, the natural and quite prudent policy is to play it safe, to hedge bets. A high level of military preparedness may not be necessary to deter Soviet aggression, and containment may have nothing to do with overt Soviet behavior in Europe, but the only way to test the effectiveness of containment is to renounce the strategy, dismantle the forces that implement it, and see what the Soviets do. No responsible official would propose such a test since the proof would be a Soviet invasion. Even though it would demonstrate that containment had been the cause of Soviet prudence, the proof would be quite unacceptable.

The operational manifestation of this conservative bias is the familiar worst-case planning syndrome. In essence, the worst case is devised by looking at a scenario combining estimates of adversary capability (constructed by extrapolating somewhat beyond known capability) with the most malevolent intention. Strategies and forces are then developed to counter the worst case. The assumption is that

configurations adequate to thwart the worst-possible contingency will also be effective in lesser situations.

There are, however, at least four drawbacks to this conservative bias and its manifestation, worst-case planning. First, constructing the worst case risks exaggerating the threat beyond what it may actually be. If the worst case fails to materialize, its proponents are likely to be accused of "crying wolf." Second, when worst-case preparations indeed exceed the capability and intent of the adversary, they may seem unduly provocative and may make matters worse. Third, preparing for the most stressful possible contingency is almost always more expensive than preparing for lesser problems; the longer the worst case does not arise (possibly because of the preparations), the greater the pressure to reduce costs. Fourth and finally, preparing for the worst case readies one for lesser cases only if those cases are analogous to the worst case. If lesser contingencies are not microcosms of the worst case, the results can be irrelevant preparations that delude us into believing we can do things we cannot in fact do. The most obvious example is assuming that preparing for the NATO worst case also prepares us for third world contingencies, a problem to which we will return in the last chapter.

Technological Nature

The fifth influence is technological. Spurred primarily by enormous increases in the sophistication and applications of computer and related technologies, a qualitative revolution has taken place in the lethality of weapon systems rivaling in its impact on thinking about warfare such earlier innovations as the tank and the airplane. This revolution extends across the spectrum of weaponry and has had the effect of elevating the importance of technological processes within the strategymaking process to the point that, in some instances, technological possibility has become the primary determinant of strategy.

The effect of technology on strategy is paradoxical, complex, and too extensive for detailed consideration here, but it can be exemplified in three ways: the effect of lethality on thinking about the usefulness of the military instrument, the discontinuity between declaratory strategy and strategies for deployment and employment, and the spiraling costs associated with advanced weaponry. All three factors have had at least an indirect effect on grand strategy and its formulation.

The qualitative rise in lethality is often associated with the advent of thermonuclear weapons and of delivery systems capable of reaching the homelands of superpowers. As discussed in detail later, the effects have been profound. At a minimum, nuclear weaponry has elevated the deterrent purpose of weaponry to a virtually unprecedented level. Warfare between the superpowers poses the significant possibility of escalating to nuclear exchange and that is such a catastrophic prospect that US-Soviet relations necessarily have been moderated to lessen the possibility.

The impact of the rise in lethality also extends to the so-called conventional battlefield. The nuclear revolution and parallel advances in nonnuclear weapon systems promise to make that conventional battlefield an incredibly deadly place and have greatly affected thinking about defense of Western Europe. Even a conflict in which nuclear weapons were not used could be virtually indistinguishable from a nuclear war except for radiation effects. Such carnage and destruction lead many people to wonder whether the effort could serve any purpose. The prospect that such a conflict could escalate to a nuclear exchange and leave the "defended" territory little more than a pile of irradiated rubble adds fuel to this concern.

Lethality thus has a paradoxical effect on strategy. By making the military instrument qualitatively more efficient in destructiveness, technology may have diminished that instrument's utility (military means may have become too efficient). There is great question, for instance, about whether any rational political purpose could ever be served by

employing nuclear weapons. It is certainly arguable that the primary reason that there has been no war between the Soviet Union and the United States is the fear that such a conflict would end in mutual annihilation.

The seemingly ceaseless discovery and development of new weapons have also created heightened tension at the various levels of strategy. The siren's allure of advanced capabilities, combined with the considerable lead times from the decisions to procure new weapon systems to actual deployments, has resulted in mismatches between declaratory strategies at the grand-strategic level and deployment and employment strategies. The result is tension between what Americans *say* they want to do (grand declaratory strategy), what they are *capable* of doing (deployment strategy), and how they *plan* to do it (employment strategy).

The purported capabilities of new weapon systems are often dramatic, as exemplified by the increases in accuracy of ballistic missiles that provide counterforce capability against hardened targets. The emergence of this particular capability is somewhat at odds with traditional American declaratory nuclear strategy, which emphasizes deterrence by retaliatory threat, since counterforce-capable weapons are at least amenable (some would argue most meaningful) to an employment strategy of preemptive attack. Much of the debate about the nuclear strategy implementing containment (discussed more fully in chapter 8) concerns the effect of such emerging weapon systems on American declaratory strategy.

Finally, the sophisticated weapon systems emerging from the technological process are not only highly capable, they are also very expensive. The high costs of these systems influence strategy in two ways. On one hand, resources available to procure military hardware are always limited. High "copy" costs limit the number of systems that can be procured and enliven interservice rivalries about *which* systems will be purchased. On the other hand, equipment is becoming so expensive that the circumstances in which one would be willing

to put it in harm's way are subject to question. The copy cost of the B-1 bomber has escalated to the point of making the risk of losing one in combat cautionary.

The result has been procurement of relatively small numbers of extremely sophisticated weapon systems, few, if any, of which have been tested in combat. In addition to questions of quantity versus quality at the employment strategy level and charges of "gold plating" in the political debate, smaller numbers raise questions about the extent and flexibility of options for employing the military instrument. The possibility of fighting a numerically superior foe on several fronts (e.g., simultaneous Soviet thrusts into West Germany and Iran) inevitably raises questions about US ability to maintain the containment line.

Economic Constraints

The sixth influence on grand strategy is economic. Implementing the American grand strategy of containment is an expensive proposition. Although the expense can be moderated somewhat by manipulating the number of places one puts on the list of vital (as opposed to major or peripheral) interests, defending America has become a costly task. This economic burden runs afoul of the traditional aversion for large-scale, peacetime defense spending. The United States was founded partially as a reaction to British taxation to pay for forces pretensively guarding the colonies from Indians (a burden – taxation without representation – that many colonists found unacceptable). In addition, the American tradition has been to reduce its forces to a minimum size, and hence cost, when we are not at war. This, of course, meant that prior to the post-World War II period, the United States entered wars unprepared and unmobilized, but our protection from enemies by wide oceans made this circumstance acceptable. In the modern world where a major war will likely have to be fought with "forces in being" at the time it begins

and where Soviet rockets could reach American soil literally in minutes of the onset of hostilities, the luxury of low-cost defense no longer exists. That realization does not, however, make Americans any happier about the defense burden even though they have carried it for more than a quarter century.

The problem is particularly acute in the late 1980s and probably will continue beyond the decade. The heart of the current malaise is the huge budget deficits that have occurred in the 1980s. There are differing opinions about whether government deficits are necessarily bad, but there is virtual unanimity that deficits of the size accruing in the 1980s are both economically and politically unacceptable.

If one is to reduce the deficit, one must decide how, and there are only two methods. These, of course, are to increase federal revenues by additional taxation (also known euphemistically as revenue enhancement) or to reduce spending. Neither is very appealing because each takes something (income or benefits) away from voters, but reduced spending seems most likely given the American public's widely recognized distaste for further taxes.

If reduced spending is inevitable, the question becomes whose budget suffers. In 1986, for instance, 85 percent of all governmental expenditures were in three categories: entitlement programs (e.g., Medicare), national defense, and servicing (paying the interest on) the national debt. All other government functions comprised only 15 percent of the total. Entitlements are difficult to cut because they benefit a large number of constituents (voters) and are generally mandated by law. One cannot fail to pay the interest on the national debt because of the need to borrow in the future, and much of the "fat" has been removed from the other 15 percent of the budget.

That, of course, leaves the defense budget, which is particularly vulnerable because approximately two-thirds of it is appropriated annually and is somewhat easier to cut than expenditures that are made automatically (entitlements and

debt service). To add to this vulnerability, in the middle 1980s a belief in certain politically consequential quarters began to emerge that the large amount of money spent on defense was not spent wisely. Focusing on $600 toilet seats and expensive wrenches, many believe that until so-called fraud, waste, and abuse are removed from the system, defense does not deserve additional support.

Whether the allegations are true or not is almost beside the point. In the current atmosphere of budgetary retrenchment and criticism of defense spending, present levels of resources, let alone additional resources, for military strategies are going to be hard to come by. To bemoan the situation is not enough; strategy must deal as best it can with whatever situation is presented.

Strategic Culture

The strategic culture (the combination of historical experience, geography, and political tradition) of a nation helps to shape its attitudes toward the military instrument of power. For example, previous results from using the military instrument greatly affect current perceptions of the places and ways the instrument can be appropriately and effectively employed. Thus experience has much to do with a nation's assignment of roles to military power in achieving the nation's goals. Each of the factors in strategic culture has acted quite differently in shaping the strategy process in the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, comparing the two helps to illustrate how strategic culture influences how we view strategy.

Historical experience may be the most basic factor. In the broadest sense, how we view our history at war and at peace predisposes how we look at the present and the future. History has taught Americans and Soviets (more generally Russians) different lessons.

At least until quite recently, the American experience with military affairs has been one in which war has been viewed as the interruption of prolonged and more normal interludes of peace and in which there has been little need for sustained concern with national defense. Because American soil has not been seriously menaced by foreign invaders since the War of 1812, when the United States has had to go to war, it has usually fought in an expeditionary manner, far from home in defense of extended interests rather than hearth and home. Moreover, the experience before Korea and Vietnam was one of success. American political purposes were served by the experience at arms (the War of 1812 being a single exception not often acknowledged). From this experience has grown the traditional American self-image of an essentially pacific people slow to anger but effective once mobilized. That this image is not accepted by some against whom we have fought makes the image no less vivid.

Soviet experience has been quite different. For Russians of whatever political persuasion, national survival has always been a major concern, and failures to prepare for military action have exacted a high price. Russian history is replete with invasion and expansion. The list of foreign invaders goes back at least as far as the Golden Hordes of the Mongols and forward through the Polish princes and Napoleon to Hitler. In the twentieth century alone, there have been four major invasions of Russian soil: the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, the Russian Civil War of 1919–22 (when one of the invaders was the United States), and World War II. The last of these experiences, known in the Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War, is the most instructive. In that war, upward of 20 million Soviet citizens lost their lives, and the Soviet Union nearly lost before the German armies were stopped in the environs of Moscow by the Russian winter. The result has been a "Barbarossa complex" (from the code name of the German invasion) that teaches that the Soviets must never again be unprepared for war.

Geography is also an influence. In the American case, once again, that influence has been largely benign in at least two senses. First, the geographic position of the United States has protected us from foreign invasion. In effect an island nation, the United States has been protected by broad oceans so that we have been able to afford the luxury of being militarily unmobilized for much of our history. The geographic inheritance of the United States has also been benevolent in the sense that the North American continent is exceptionally well endowed with natural resources (fertile soil, mineral and energy resources). Thus, for much of our history, we have been largely self-sufficient in natural resources. Only recently, as some resources have been depleted and as needs have arisen for exotic materials (e.g., titanium) that do not exist here, has the United States become dependent on foreign sources of materials. The idea of defending access to something like the petroleum reserves of the Persian Gulf is thus a far more alien concept to Americans than it is to the energy-deficient countries of Europe. In short, geography has had the effect of shielding Americans from much of geopolitics.

Geography has not been so kind to the Soviets. Although the modern Soviet Union occupies more territory than any other nation and has a rich endowment of mineral and energy resources, it is also a physically vulnerable place. European Russia is part of the northern European plain that has been a historic east-west invasion route in both directions. Moreover, a look at the map shows that the Soviet Union is ringed by real enemies and reluctant allies from Norway in the northwest to Korea in the east. Many of these enemies have been richly earned through a series of Russian military adventures, of course, but nonetheless they are sources of the need for military preparedness. If American history suggests that geography is a buffer against military threat, Russian history equally suggests that geography means a need for vigilance.

Political tradition manifests itself in several ways. One manifestation is national political ideology concerning the

relationship between man and the state and the proper function of government. In Soviet-American relations, ideology is obviously a point of difference, contrasting the state-centered, messianic, expansionist, and socialist worldview of Marxism-Leninism and the liberal democratic, capitalistic American view. Although the notion is much more explicitly stated in the Marxist formulation, both ideologies view themselves as universally applicable (representing an order that all countries should adopt), and both countries have supported like-minded groups around the globe. Much of the conflict in Soviet-American relations stems from ideological cleavage, although many would argue that geopolitics (the struggle for influence between great powers) now predominates the competition.

The impact of political tradition is also evident in historical and current ideas about the proper levels of political participation. The Communist regime in the Soviet Union inherited and has perpetuated an extremely closed, authoritarian Russian political tradition. The Soviet Union simply has no tradition of broad-based, mass political participation, and, in some ways, the most fundamental long-term effect of the Russian Revolution was to exchange one authoritarian ruling elite for another. This tradition contrasts sharply, of course, with the open, highly participatory American democratic tradition.

The effects of political tradition on strategic culture are ambiguous and, to some extent, contradictory. At one level, closed societies tend to be more militaristic than open societies. Since these societies are not based on popular consensus, helping to keep the regime in power is an important military function. Thus, military preparedness is a higher priority for political authorities than would otherwise be the case. At the same time, the absence of open political debate means that the government of a closed society has less difficulty in allocating scarce resources to military purposes rather than to more popular priorities, such as agricultural

productivity or consumer goods (a factor historically evident in Soviet resource allocation). Finally, a closed society controls access to information to a much greater degree than is possible in an open society, and this facilitates manipulation of knowledge about military actions (democratic regimes also attempt to manipulate information, but are generally much less successful).

Many observers contend that need to develop political consensus for military employment makes pursuit of limited political objectives in war extremely difficult for open societies. Explanations for this phenomenon vary and generally have complex psychological roots. The basic line of thought is that unlimited objectives (e.g., unconditional surrender) are more concrete and understandable than are more limited objectives. Since they portray the enemy as an absolute evil who must be defeated absolutely, they justify the sacrifices entailed by warfare to a greater degree than limited objectives. Put more simply, absolute objectives are easier to "sell" to the public than limited political objectives.

The tendency of open societies to prefer "all-or-nothing" military solutions alarms many observers in a nuclear-armed world, but it is instructive to officials responsible for framing American policy. Of the four major conflicts fought by the United States in the twentieth century, the two (World Wars I and II) that enjoyed more popular support had unlimited political objectives; whereas the two largely unpopular conflicts (Korea and Vietnam) had limited political objectives. In both the latter cases, opinion surveys clearly indicated that the public never understood the objectives and, hence, never embraced the goals. Moreover, the limited nature of the objectives in the Korean and Vietnamese wars lacked the moral force of total objectives. Since any future direct American participation in enforcing the containment line outside of the European theater will likely be based on limited political objectives, the difficulty of nurturing public

favor in such situations is a major cautionary note and source of contention for American policy.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the web of idiosyncratic factors that has the effect of placing boundaries on American use of military force. They are, of course, politically derived and politically expressed limitations that the strategist must anticipate and accommodate because a military strategy that is unacceptable politically is a strategy that is likely to be rejected. On occasion, some good military advice may be lost in the process of being weighed against political criteria, and that can be frustrating. The frustration can, however, be lessened by knowing what the criteria are. Among the elements that must be understood are the actors in the national security policy process and their institutional positions, elements to which the discussion now moves.

CHAPTER 5

GRAND STRATEGY ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

Decisions about the content of grand strategy and the resources available to implement that strategy are products of political processes within the federal government. For convenience sake, the system by which national security policy is made can be discussed with the National Security Council (NSC) system, created by the National Security Act of 1947, as the central theme.

The National Security Act, among other things, establishes those statutory institutions most responsible for coordinating the various actions of government that affect national security. The individuals who comprise the National Security Council are key individuals in making grand strategy, and a key to understanding national security policy is recognizing that policy is the result both of the interactions of formal institutions and the personalities of the individuals who operate them.

The basic principle by which the system works is that of checks and balances. At the formal, constitutional level, the principle regulates the interaction between the executive and legislative branches of government and, when the system works the way it is intended, guarantees that neither branch acts arbitrarily without the consultation or approval of the other. Within this relationship, the executive—the president—has the primary responsibility and power but is counterbalanced by Congress, principally through the power of the purse and oversight of presidential actions by congressional committees.

The checks and balances system also acts in a more informal manner, especially within the executive branch, to ensure that the widest possible range of policy perspectives is vented before policy is made. What this means is that the NSC system, augmented in individual cases where the interests of other agencies are also affected, ensures that all institutional perspectives on given problems have a chance to be heard before key decisions are made. When the system works as intended, the result is an effective system in terms of creating the greatest possible level of review and the greatest possible chance that wise policy will result. At the same time, the very thoroughness of the system often means that it is time-consuming and frequently inefficient. As a practical matter, there is always some tension between effective and efficient operation.

Before looking at the specific roles of different actors and their interactions, a caveat is in order. What has just been outlined is a rational, even idealized, system of governmental operation, and such events as the so-called Iran-Contra affair seem to cast suspicion on the orderliness and even the wisdom of the system. Clearly, the system did not work as described in that event. Rather than negating the principles on which the system is supposed to work, the affair demonstrated the wisdom of the principles in the decisionmaking system, and especially the formal and informal system of checks and balances.

With this introduction in mind, we can look at the various influences on the system. We begin by examining the role of the executive branch since it is preeminent and note the checks and balances built into executive power. We then look at the bases of congressional authority and finally at the influence of other actors, principally interest groups and public opinion, on the process.

Executive Branch

The executive branch of government has the major responsibility for the formulation and execution of foreign and national security policy. At the pinnacle of this system, of course, is the president, whose powers are both constitutional and political in nature. The president is assisted by relevant executive branch agencies, organized around but not limited to those advisers and agencies named by the National Security Act.

The constitutional responsibilities of the president in the national security area are stated succinctly in Article 2, Section 2, of that document. By constitutional provision, the president is designated as commander in chief of the armed forces, has the sole authority to negotiate treaties with foreign governments, and has the power to appoint and remove ambassadors and other officials. This short listing reflects both the compactness of the Constitution and the relative simplicity of the time in which it was written. In 1787, after all, governmental activity was considerably more restricted than it is today, and the international role of a young and physically isolated United States was marginal and circumscribed.

Presidential responsibilities have expanded as the United States role in the world has increased. As the size of American armed forces has increased and American commitments with security implications have become global, the president's role as commander in chief has become much greater. The power of the president to act in this capacity, particularly in the actual employment of armed forces, is shared with Congress and is highly controversial. Important checks and balances are built into this role. For one thing, the president commands only those armed forces raised and maintained by Congress, and only Congress has the authority to declare war. This was originally a significant limitation of presidential power; but since nations now seldom formally declare war, it has become less important. Such mechanisms as the controversial War

Powers Act (which places reporting and approval requirements on the employment of American forces in combat) and the Arms Exchange Control Act (which limits the size of arms exchanges that can be undertaken without specific congressional approval) have been enacted to attempt to restore congressional power in this area.

The treaty-making power has also expanded. According to the Constitution, only the president or his representative (plenipotentiaries) can negotiate treaties with foreign governments. The framers of the Constitution assumed that agreements between the United States and other countries would be in the form of treaties and, as a result, gave Congress a check by requiring the president to secure the advice and consent of two-thirds of the Senate on any treaty.

The sheer volume of foreign affairs no longer allows all international interactions of the US government to be handled through the treaty process. Instead, the overwhelming majority of all formal relations now take the form of executive agreements, formal obligations between the United States and other governments that have the force of law but do not require senatorial approval. In these cases, the congressional check is informal. If the agreement requires spending American monies (they usually do), Congress can exercise the powers of purse; if not, Congress can retaliate against the president in some other area of public policy.

The third presidential power is the authority to appoint and remove officials. The advantage this confers to presidents is in helping to ensure the loyalty of key decisionmakers and implementers. The power to appoint allows presidents to name those who share their views, and the power to remove assures continuing loyalty. Originally, the Constitution envisaged that this authority would apply mainly to ambassadors, but as the power and size of the federal government have expanded so have the numbers of appointees. Now, literally thousands of so-called political appointees (presidential appointees who do not have civil

service protection) are named at the senior and middle management levels of various cabinet and other agencies.

Once again, there is a congressional check in that almost all important presidential appointments require confirmation by the Senate. The confirmation process does not encompass the personal staff of presidents, which includes the professional staff of the National Security Council, an exemption that became controversial in the wake of the Iran-Contra affair. The check is used selectively by Congress, which does not have the time or resources to examine all appointees exhaustively, and thus Congress reserves its detailed consideration for controversial positions and individuals.

If the constitutional prerogatives of presidents convey powers, their political powers can be even more impressive. Presidential political powers are in areas that are not subject to congressional checks and balances and thus can yield advantages over Congress. At least five such powers stand out.

The first is that the president is the only nationally elected official. Thus, a president is the only politician with a national constituency and the only person who can legitimately claim to be the representative of and speaker for "all the people." By contrast, senators and representatives can only speak for their states or districts. Thus, their individual views are generally not accorded the same weight as that of the president.

The second advantage presidents have is that, at least nominally, the entire federal bureaucracy works for them. Although presidents rapidly learn the limits of their control over elements of the bureaucratic structures (especially those structures run by people with civil service protection), the advantage in terms of access to information and expertise on the range of public matters is great, since the resources available to Congress are considerably smaller.

The third advantage is the mantle of office. Simply occupying the presidency bestows prestige, credibility, and deference to the holder of the office. As the political leader of the world's most powerful nation, the president is

automatically a world leader. Aside from the prestige this provides, the position means presidents routinely have access to other world leaders and thus can claim personal, even intimate, knowledge of such contemporaries. At the same time, what presidents do and say is important simply because they are presidents.

The importance of the presidency and its occupants leads to a fourth advantage – unparalleled access to the electronic and print media. What any president does is news, and there is an entire White House press corps whose entire livelihood and success are based on its surmises about presidents. If a president wants publicity for a position that he does not wish to officially endorse, all he has to do is wander down to the press room, declare his remarks off the record (at which point the president becomes a "well-placed spokesman" or the like), and the total resources of the electronic and print media are at his beck and call. At times such attention may be closer than a president might like. On the other hand, no other public figure can command such media attention.

Fifth and finally, presidential power in the national security area has been enhanced by de facto delegation of authority from Congress. With certain high-profile exceptions, Congress does not enmesh itself in the day-to-day workings of national security policy, and with good reason. For one thing, national security affairs are almost invariably complex and multifaceted, and most congressmen have neither the expertise nor the interest to follow them in depth. For another thing, the sheer volume of national security affairs is beyond the capabilities of congressional scrutiny, especially since Congress must consider public affairs across the range of public policy areas. Finally, many security problems are time-sensitive. The structure and nature of Congress are best suited to situations that allow thorough deliberation and debate, both of which are time-consuming. National security situations often move faster than the pace of congressional debate, so that a president must act after only informal

consultation with the leader of the houses of Congress and the chairpersons of relevant committees.

The cumulative effect of the president's constitutional and political position is dominance of the national security system. Generally speaking, presidential ascendancy has been expanding throughout the period since World War II. Before that war, foreign and security policies were relatively uncomplicated. The chief, and virtually sole, institution responsible for carrying out foreign policy was the State Department. Concerns that we now routinely label as national security considerations were of comparatively minor importance.

The emergence of the United States as a major world power in competition with the Soviet Union after the war changed that. Clearly, a major motif of that postwar competition has been and continues to be military. As a result, the national security implications of foreign policy became more important, and the terms foreign policy and national security policy came to be used interchangeably.

This change in orientation was recognized officially and organizationally in the National Security Act of 1947. In addition to creating an independent Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense, the act provided a structure within which to fashion national security policy, the National Security Council. The statutory members of the council are the president (who convenes it and serves as chair), the vice president, the secretary of state, and the secretary of defense. In addition, the president may appoint additional members, and the act specifies that the director of Central Intelligence (DCI) and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serve as advisers to NSC. Finally, the act contains provision for a professional staff to coordinate the council's activities. The position of national security adviser (NSA) evolved from this provision.

The institutions represented on the National Security Council are the core actors within the executive branch who

examine national security policy. They bring to bear different institutional perspectives on foreign and defense concerns and thus, when the system operates properly, guarantee that the range of institutional concerns are addressed before policy is made.

Despite its historically preeminent role as the foreign policy agency, the State Department's influence has been in gradual decline. The department is still responsible for US embassies and consulates and their personnel up to and including the ambassadors. Most American business with foreign governments is still conducted through the embassy system, but, particularly in high-profile situations with national security overtones, other actors have infringed on traditional State Department "territory."

There are several reasons for this. The business of the State Department is diplomacy and its preferred instrument of power is the diplomatic instrument; as the economic and military instruments have become more prominent, their "advocates" have assumed more importance in the decision system. Moreover, the State Department's preference for diplomacy has earned it, rightly or wrongly, a reputation for being "soft" on policy issues within other segments of the national security community.

A second source of decline has been the tendency of a number of post-1945 presidents to actively conduct their own foreign policies, and in the process to draw into the White House a number of policy functions historically associated with the State Department. This was especially true during the Nixon administration, when a good deal of the real responsibility for making security policy was given to the staff of the National Security Council and particularly the national security adviser, Dr Henry Kissinger.

A third source of decline is the revolution in communications. In earlier times, embassies in foreign countries were distant in time as well as space from Washington, D.C. As a result, ambassadors had to have

real-decision authority because of the impossibility of timely communication with Washington. Today, that authority has diminished; generally, ambassadors serve as little more than communications links between the governments of their host countries and decisionmakers in Washington.

The other statutory member of the NSC (other than the vice president) is the secretary of defense. The Department of Defense (DOD) is, of course, the largest actor in the system in terms of manpower and budget, and it also serves as the implementing arm for the military instrument of power.

The role of DOD has increased as foreign policy problems have been redefined as national security problems. Its role has been more or less enhanced depending on the predisposition of administrations to look to the military instrument as the proper tool for dealing with foreign problems. Thus, the Reagan administration has elevated that role to a much higher level than did the Carter administration.

It is the genius of the NSC system to set these competitive agencies as coequals in forming policy. In important national security decisions, both the secretaries of state and defense have a prominent voice. (On many matters, this interaction occurs at the assistant secretary level or below, but it extends upward to the secretaries and the president.) The secretaries bring to bear the unique institutional perspective and the accumulated expertise and judgment of their agencies. In this process of review and consultation, the relevant arguments and counterarguments are likely to be aired. Although wise policy is not always the result, policy is at least well informed.

The three statutory advisory assistants to the NSC aid the statutory members in reaching decisions. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for instance, has the primary responsibility of offering military advice on various policy options. The director of Central Intelligence, as head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), has the primary responsibility of gathering and providing intelligence information on the activities of foreign governments. This

information is especially provided through the National Intelligence Daily, a summary of world events, and the National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), summaries and recommendations based on intelligence gathered. Finally, the NSC staff, headed by the national security adviser whose original role was NSC office manager, has as its primary responsibility coordinating the activities of the action agencies.

Controversy has surrounded, to varying degrees, both the DCI/CIA and the NSC staff. The major source of controversy regarding the CIA has centered on those activities within its Directorate of Operations that fall under the title "covert actions." The directorate's ability to engage in secret actions against foreign governments had been severely curtailed under the Carter administration and DCI Stansfield Turner. Ronald Reagan appointed William Casey, an old friend and former spymaster under the legendary "Wild Bill" Donovan of World War II fame, to the DCI's position. One of Casey's chief goals was to revitalize the agency's covert-action capabilities.

In the wake of the Iran-Contra affair, the National Security Council staff has come under particular scrutiny. When it was first formed, its role was viewed largely as clerical, collating and transcribing the actions of the NSC. Gradually that role expanded, especially under John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, who elevated national security adviser to a policy adviser. Richard Nixon further expanded the NSA role to policy formulation and in the Iran-Contra affair, the NSC staff adopted the role of policy implementer, albeit in a clandestine manner.

Two concerns have arisen as the NSC role has expanded. First, there is concern about the propriety of the NSC staff acting as a policy implementer. Many would like to see staff functions reduced to the original intent, but others argue that, since the NSC staff is a personal staff of the president, the president should be able to organize it in the way that best fits his own style. Second, the NSA and other NSC staff are not

confirmed by the Senate nor are their activities subject to direct congressional oversight, as are the activities of most government agencies. The question of accountability has thus been raised.

Legislative Branch

Congress is the other major institutional actor. Within the checks and balances system that undergirds the US Constitution, there is planned tension between the executive and legislative branches. A major role of Congress is to oversee and restrain the actions of the executive, and this is accomplished constitutionally and politically.

The constitutional restraints given to Congress, as pointed out earlier, are largely reactive and seek to review presidential actions to ensure they are in the national interest. These restraints operate in shared areas of responsibilities, or what are otherwise known as *concurrent powers* exercised by both branches. These include raising and maintaining armed forces, declaring war, advising and consenting on treaties, and confirming officials.

The political powers of Congress in the national security area consist of two related powers. The first is the power of the purse. All appropriations bills, by constitutional provision, must originate in the House of Representatives, and the executive branch of government cannot spend any money in the national defense (or for any other purpose) that has not been appropriated by Congress. Since virtually everything the executive does costs money, this is not an insignificant power.

The power of the purse can be exercised both directly and indirectly. In a direct sense, Congress can refuse to fund all or part of the monies requested by the president for national security projects. Prime examples of this direct application in the 1980s include the MX (Peacekeeper) missile system and the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), both of which were funded at levels considerably lower than those sought by the

administration. There are some things that Congress cannot directly control, such as supporting military personnel in a combat zone, and in these instances Congress can voice its displeasure indirectly by such means as threatening to deny funding for other presidentially backed programs.

The other political tool of Congress is known as "watchdogging." A primary purpose of the Congress is to monitor executive policies and programs, both in terms of their wisdom and the degree to which they are exercised. The primary tool for this is the web of standing committees in the two houses of Congress. Most of the interaction between Congress and the executive branch in matters of national security occur in these committees, and the most powerful members of Congress in the area of national security policy are the chairs and ranking minority members of relevant oversight committees. In the area of national security, the relevant Senate committees (with their House equivalents in parentheses where the title is different) are: Foreign Relations (Foreign Affairs), Armed Services, Finance (Ways and Means), Select Committee on Intelligence, and Appropriations.

Other Actors

In addition to the governmental actors with formal responsibility in the policy process, other actors directly affect the substance of strategy. Two major sources of influence outside formal governmental channels are readily identifiable interest groups and public opinion.

At the most general level, an interest group is a collection of individuals who share common interests different from other groups' interests. In the political sphere, a large number of such groups represent the gamut of interest on general issues of grand strategy and more specific policy issues. Each group attempts to influence public policy in directions compatible with its beliefs. Through such techniques as

lobbying and education, interest groups transmit policy options and positions from the private sector to governmental actors who make policy decisions.

Classifying the different kinds of interest groups in any neat, precise way is difficult, but there are at least four criteria for dividing groups. Certain groups can be distinguished by the breadth of the issues in which they take an interest. At one extreme are the broad interest groups, such as the League of Women Voters or AFL-CIO, who take positions on virtually all issues. These generalist groups differ from more specific groups who may take position only on foreign policy problems (e.g., the Council on Foreign Relations) or some subset of foreign policy. Generalist groups are larger and have higher public visibility, but, quite often, the more specialized groups possess greater expertise in their particular areas of interest and, hence, are more effective in influencing decisions.

A second perspective on interest groups relates to their organizational permanence. Most organized groups persist over time and attempt to promote enduring interests, but the last two decades have seen the rise of so-called single-interest groups. These groups usually begin as loose, ad hoc coalitions responding to a discrete interest, and they have mixed records in terms of permanence. The various anti-Vietnam groups represented a single-interest group that dissolved after their issues disappeared. The antidraft registration movement of the early 1980s is a more recent example. The groups organized by Ralph Nader are examples of single-interest groups that have shown more permanence by widening their purviews.

A third way to view interest-group activity is the degree to which they focus on strategic issues. Such organizations as the Foreign Policy Association or the Veterans of Foreign Wars have foreign policy/strategic interests as primary concerns, and they generally develop elaborate positions encompassing the broad range of strategic policies. Others become directly interested in specific issues when their interest areas become

relevant to foreign policy (e.g., the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Association of Manufacturers).

Fourth, interest groups may be distinguished in terms of whether they represent "public" or "private interests." An important phenomenon paralleling the rise of single-issue groups has been the emergence of groups purporting to protect broad public interest (e.g., the public at large) rather than more parochial interests. Such groups as Common Cause or Moral Majority are controversial because their views of what constitutes the public "good" are often based on ideological precepts (liberal or conservative) and because many suspect that their apparent piety in professing the interests of all masks more parochial concern.

The most controversial interest groups represent private interests that may profit directly from policy outcomes. These "vested" interests exist across the whole range of policy areas (e.g., pharmaceutical firms in relation to food and drug laws), but they have gained particular prominence in the security area because of the large amounts of money traditionally allocated to defense spending.

In any open society, public opinion provides the final and ultimate restraint on governmental decisionmaking. Principles of responsibility and accountability mean that decisions must be justified as being in the public interest, and the public must be willing to bear the burdens that policy decisions create. The perception of public willingness to support policy is a particularly important consideration in the defense and security area because of the potentially extraordinary burdens that decisions may impose (e.g., policies may result in war). In less extreme cases, however, public opinion as a public determinant is more constrained.

The point to be made in the national security area is that there is no single public opinion, but there are the opinions of *several* publics. For better or worse, the vast majority of US citizenry has no developed or sustained interest in foreign policy issues. This *uninformed public* does not regularly seek

information about foreign affairs, and it does not form opinions consistently unless its own interests are directly affected by events (e.g., war), an event receives wide publicity (e.g., the Iran-Contra affair), or efforts are made to mobilize it (e.g., the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics). Participation by the uninformed public tends to be sporadic and malleable; rather than shape foreign policy, its opinions are shaped by it.

The second largest public sector is the *informed public*, which is defined as citizens who regularly keep up with, and form opinions about, foreign affairs. Its opinions tend to be generalized rather than specific (e.g., prodefense or antidefense spending as opposed to being for or against specific weapons deployment). Access to information for this group is generally limited to the electronic and popular print media, and most of its members are professionals whose work does not directly involve them in foreign affairs. This group generally contains local opinion leaders (e.g., clergy and journalists) who perform the important task of transmitting information to the uninformed public. With its limited information and greater focus on other areas, however, the informed public's role in the policy process is more reactive than formative.

The most important influence on decisionmakers comes from the *effective* (or *elite*) *public*. This segment comprises that part of the public that actively puts forward and advocates various policy alternatives. It includes interest group representatives, national opinion leaders (e.g., the national media), and individuals whose lives and livelihoods are directly affected by foreign affairs (e.g., executives of corporations doing business overseas). In the area of grand strategy and military strategy, the expert community of defense intellectuals-scholars, "think tanks," and retired military officers are particularly influential. These individuals seek to influence policy by advocating positions in scholarly and professional journals, testifying before Congress, and the

like. This group has been especially prominent in nuclear strategy formulation.

Conclusion

The process of formulating grand strategy is not a sterile analytical procedure in which changes on one side of a magic formula automatically suggest or produce reactions on the other side. Nor is it an exercise in deductive logic where first principles produce axioms and corollaries that cascade downward to culminate in a comprehensive plan to confront hostile forces. Rather, the grand strategy process is inherently a political process with all the characteristics of any political process.

The product of such a thorough process is usually compromise. In a closed society, a small elite can largely impose its will on the majority, but the interplay of interests and ideas in a democratic society requires some kind of consensus. Reaching consensus usually involves all sides giving something to get something. For those in search of constancy and clarity of guidance in translating abstract ideas into concrete operational strategies, the result can be confusion and even frustration. It is a process that only has great appeal if one thoroughly considers the alternatives.

SECTION III

THE MILITARY DIMENSION

CHAPTER 6

MILITARY STRATEGY

The discussion of the strategy process in chapter 2 indicated that military strategy consists of four distinct elements: force development, force deployment, force employment, and coordination of these actions in pursuit of national objectives as directed by grand strategy. In this chapter we discuss these four elements in broad, fundamental terms. Development, deployment, employment, and coordination appear, at first glance, to provide a logical sequence for the discussion that follows. Any discussion of military strategy, however, should begin with force employment concepts. How one plans to employ military forces should determine to a major degree the forces that will be developed, where those forces will be deployed, and the coordination required.

Force Employment Strategy

At the military strategy level, force employment refers to the use of forces in a broad, national sense. Employment decisions revolve around the perceived threat and can be discussed in terms of two basic questions. First, where would forces be employed? Second, against whom would they be employed? We consider each question separately while bearing in mind that they are interrelated.

Where Would Forces Be Employed?

Until the dawn of the nuclear age, the United States had never faced a serious externally based threat to its borders. Blessed with broad oceans to its east and west, and with

nonhostile lesser powers to the north and south, the United States did not require a significant military establishment to counter external enemies until it entered the international arena in a serious way. As late as World War II, the United States relied on a small professional military force that could be augmented in times of crises by citizen-soldiers. But even in wartime, a large standing military force was not required for homeland defense because an invasion of the United States was a remote possibility. Clearly, US military forces, if employed, would only go into combat overseas. This circumstance helps explain why the United States has had a world-class navy since before the turn of the twentieth century, even in periods when its other military services languished. Naval forces could protect American shores and before the age of long-range air power were the only means of projecting American power overseas.

Not all nations have had such good fortune. Some perceive themselves to be physically threatened from every quarter and thus plan to employ their forces on the defensive "at home." The best-known modern example of this situation (perhaps an extreme case) is Switzerland. A small nation surrounded on all sides by powerful, oft-warring neighbors, the Swiss devote their entire military establishment to homeland defense. Thus, where forces might be employed can be the result of happy—or unhappy—geographic accidents.

Technology can also play an important role in the equation. The development of aircraft and missiles with intercontinental range has put all nations at risk regardless of their geographic circumstances. The advent of nuclear weapons only increased the risk. As a result, even the United States has diverted a significant portion of its military establishment to homeland defense. Air defense forces are obviously intended for this purpose. Nuclear retaliatory forces fulfill, in a somewhat perverse way, the same purpose. The fact remains, however, that the bulk of the US military (nearly all of the Army, most

of the Navy, and much of the Air Force) is intended for employment outside the United States.

Where one intends to employ forces is obviously important to force deployment decisions. It is also important to force development decisions because the characteristics of forces needed for homeland defense are usually far different from the characteristics of a force intended for expeditionary use. For example, the development of expeditionary forces would probably emphasize airlift and sealift assets, highly transportable ground forces, and forces to control air and sea lines of communications. Homeland defense force development might emphasize "heavier" forces, fortifications, and defensively oriented weapons (e.g., mines).

To this point, we have briefly discussed how geography and technology (two influences on the strategy process) can influence where forces will be employed, and how the place of employment can influence both force development and force deployment decisions. The discussion now moves to the second basic question about force employment.

Against Whom Would Forces Be Employed?

This issue is of crucial importance to both force development and deployment. To know the enemy is to know the nature of the threat. If strategists know the enemy they will understand how the enemy is armed and with how much, in what manner the enemy might use his forces and, ultimately, what is required to counter the threat.

For more than four decades the United States has identified the Soviet Union as the primary threat to its security interests. Clearly, this perception is correct in terms of a direct threat against the United States or its European allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. At the present time, and for the foreseeable future, only the Soviet Union has the ability and possible motive to be a credible direct threat. The result of this perception has been the development and deployment of a

force structure calculated to deter or, if required, fight the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies. Few could argue with the assertion that as the twenty-first century approaches, the Soviet threat continues to be the driving force behind US military strategy.

Regardless of how important the Soviet threat might be, the Soviets do not represent the only threat to American security interests. The "who" that threatens becomes a much more complicated proposition when one considers the far-flung security interests of the United States. The United States fought two major wars in the three decades following the end of World War II (Korea and Vietnam), and neither was against the Soviets. Additionally, the United States has been at least somewhat involved—involvement ranging from moral support to intervention—in a number of other conflicts (Quemoy and Matsu Islands, Bay of Pigs, Lebanon twice, three Arab-Israeli wars, Angola, Nicaragua, Grenada), none of which directly involved the Soviets.

There is no question that in many of these non-Soviet conflicts, which have been primarily in the third world, the United States and the Soviet Union have supported opposing forces. American actions in these conflicts were often justified by the perceived need to limit Soviet influence in the zero-sum game of superpower politics. There is also no question that the nature of the *military* threat to American interests in these third world conflicts is far different from the threat of direct confrontation with the Soviets. As the United States bitterly learned in Vietnam, the force structure, weapons, tactics, and training needed to confront the Soviets in a high-speed, mechanized war in Europe are not necessarily appropriate for combating guerrilla fighters in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

The "who" that threatens has a direct impact on the entire military strategy decisionmaking process. The diverse nature of the threat (or threats), however, presents the strategist with several dilemmas and forces the strategist to undertake a policy of risk management. We approach this problem later in

this chapter when we discuss the *coordination* portion of military strategy.

Force Development Strategy

Force employment strategy decisions determine, in a broad sense, what needs to be done, where it needs to be done, and how it should be done. These decisions are also the primary driving force behind force development strategy decisions. Force development concerns *resources* for getting the job done. How much, what kind, and how these resources are molded and shaped into a force structure are the concerns of force development. It is important to remember that although force employment drives force development, these two facets are interactive. For example, in a macrosense many force employment decisions depend on the raw resources available for development. A small, poor, isolated, and backward nation would find it difficult to wage modern, high-intensity, mechanized warfare in far-flung overseas locations. The requirements would overwhelm its available resources. In a microsense, a nation confronted by a contingency requiring immediate action is forced to rely on forces already developed regardless of raw resources available for future development. Thus, force employment and force development are dependent variables.

Resources are the key to force development. The key resources are well known. Among them are raw materials (or access to them), an industrial base (or access to one), population, technological sophistication, and economic wherewithal. These are the primary factors in determining the possible force structure that can be developed in response to force employment decisions. The strategist's function is to manipulate these primary factors to develop a force structure in concert with force employment strategy.

The strategist's manipulation of resources is controlled by the obvious need to take advantage of a nation's strengths and

to offset weaknesses. Some nations with large populations, but relatively backward industrial and technological bases, have emphasized massive force structures whose effectiveness relied on the sacrifice of ordinary soldiers employed in overwhelming numbers. Some Asian societies have followed this path, as did tsarist Russia. Life was not "cheap" in those societies, as some have claimed. Rather, lives were the most plentiful and available resource to use against enemies who were often industrially and technologically superior.

Western nations that prospered by industrial development and technological sophistication have tended to rely on the mechanized forces and firepower generated by industry and technology. This trend became most pronounced after World War I. The predisposition to substitute fire and steel for flesh and blood has been most obvious in the American experience. Incredible industrial output and mastery of technology have allowed the United States to substitute things for people, a trend which fits well with its dominant Judeo-Christian ethic emphasizing the worth of the individual and the sanctity of life (at least the sanctity of American lives).

There are critics who claim that the American penchant for technology may have gone too far. The quest for more sophisticated weapons has dramatically increased unit costs, thus limiting the number of weapons that can be purchased and, in turn, limiting the size of the force structure. Potential adversaries, most notably the Soviets, have fielded weapon systems that are often somewhat less sophisticated, considerably cheaper, and far more plentiful. The problem for the strategist is how to achieve a favorable balance between technological capabilities on one side and the capabilities of mass on the other.

Achieving a favorable balance is a particularly vexing problem for several reasons. First, it is difficult, if not impossible, to calculate what degree of technological sophistication (quality) offsets what amount of mass (quantity) or vice versa, particularly in the crucible of battle. Second,

technology changes rapidly and the military advantages it offers are almost always temporary. Third, new technology is not battle tested before one is forced to rely on it. Fourth, possession of superior technology is no guarantee that the technology will be employed effectively or, in fact, that it will be employed at all (note, for example, that the United States did not employ nuclear weapons in either Korea or Vietnam). Finally, clever operational strategy can offset an advantage whether that advantage is in quality or quantity. In Vietnam, for example, America's enemies were inferior in virtually every measure of military power. Unfortunately for the United States, a clever strategy, often based on guerrilla operations combined with a campaign to sap US home-front support for the struggle, eventually frustrated the American effort.

In sum, force development decisions revolve around the most effective use of resources to meet the requirements of force employment decisions. The decisions involved are difficult and the situation is always fluid. But the decisions must be made in order that the force structure can be properly constructed and finally deployed.

Force Deployment Strategy

Understanding who the enemy is and where forces would likely be employed will obviously be driving factors in the deployment of forces. The design of the force structure will likewise be an important consideration, especially force size, equipment characteristics, and lift capacities. Geography also plays an important role, particularly in wartime. The United States, for example, has broad and immediate access to maritime transportation routes across both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans making large deployments by sea and the sustainment of deployed forces overseas a relatively easy task. Other nations, such as West Germany, could only deploy forces by sea through narrow chokepoints that can be sealed

off with relative ease. The Soviet Union faces the same problem to a somewhat lesser degree. None of this prevents deployment by air, of course, but the fact is large-scale deployment and long-term sustainment by air are difficult, expensive, and often risky propositions.

The strategist must perform a delicate balancing act when making decisions about deployments forward during peacetime. This is particularly true for any nation that has many security interests in different parts of the world. The strategist must balance three factors: time, vulnerability, and flexibility.

Time, of course, is the centerpiece of peacetime deployment. The primary military reason for deploying forces forward (e.g., overseas) is to reduce the time required to respond to enemy actions. Certainly, there may be other reasons for forward deployment, such as providing a deterrent, demonstrating resolve, or strengthening alliance relationships, but the hard, practical military reason involves time. Having forces in place should increase their readiness for employment and facilitate their training in a realistic environment. Further, the availability of in-place maintenance facilities and logistics depots can be of inestimable value, particularly in remote areas.

Forward basing, no matter how valuable in terms of response time, is a risk-laden undertaking because it increases vulnerability. Although more quickly available for combat, forward-based forces are more vulnerable to enemy raids or to encirclement and destruction by a rapid enemy thrust. The German blitzkrieg into the Soviet Union in 1941 offers a good example. Large segments of the Soviet military were deployed far forward. They were caught by surprise when the Germans struck swiftly into rear areas, surrounding huge pockets of Soviet formations. Many of the trapped units were destroyed or forced to surrender. Thus the strategist is faced with a dilemma. On one hand, forward deployment decreases response time and increases readiness. On the other hand,

forward-deployed forces may be so vulnerable that readiness becomes irrelevant.

The third factor the strategist must consider in deployment decisions is flexibility. If forces are deployed forward, one assumes they are deployed advantageously. However, if conflict erupts in another corner of the world, redeployment of forward-deployed forces could be time consuming and, perhaps, politically difficult.

If the strategist had perfect knowledge of the places where forces would actually be needed, deployment would pose few problems. If a nation had few vital interests overseas, the deployment problem would be mitigated. The fact is, of course, that perfect knowledge is rarely available. Further, as the world becomes more interdependent, worldwide security interests multiply particularly for a superpower such as the United States. As a result, deployment dilemmas increase and the need for a coordinated military strategy becomes paramount.

Coordination of Military Strategy

Coordination of the three parts of military strategy (employment, development, and deployment) just discussed is essentially an exercise in risk management. In the American experience, neither the will nor the resources to create adequate forces to meet every contingency have ever existed. The strategist must, therefore, make hard choices and understand the risks involved with each choice.

The fundamental problem is that enemies seek to exploit weaknesses. An enemy will attack where the adversary is weak or will seek to wage the kind of war the adversary is least capable of waging. Every military strategy decision is made in response to a threat, but it at the same time forecloses other options because of limited resources. Thus, countering one kind of threat in a particular place creates opportunities for the enemy elsewhere.

For the American strategist, concentrating efforts on the Soviet threat often presents opportunities for lesser foes. Structuring forces to wage high-intensity combat may present an enemy with the opportunity for success in other types of operations. Deployments to one place can provide openings in others. Every decision is laden with opportunity costs and risks.

How can these risks be managed? The American answer to that question in the post-World War II era has been based on so-called worst-case analysis. In essence, the United States has concentrated its efforts on preparing for the war it could least afford to lose. Clearly, the United States could not afford to lose a nuclear war. As a result, for the last four decades the United States has concentrated much of its effort on developing and deploying a nuclear retaliatory force designed to convince the Soviets that a nuclear attack on the United States or its allies would certainly result in disaster and devastation for the Soviet Union. That is, the United States has viewed nuclear deterrence as its first priority, and nuclear war as *the* worst case to be avoided.

At a lower worst-case level, the United States has concentrated on conventional forces designed, equipped, and deployed to counter possible Soviet conventional aggression in Western Europe. Recently, political upheavals and unrest in Southwest Asia have spurred efforts to develop and deploy forces to that portion of the globe, an undertaking that has placed considerable strain on limited American capabilities. It is true that the United States has developed and deployed conventional capabilities elsewhere, most notably Northeast Asia, but the primary focus remains on Europe. The subjugation of Western Europe by the Soviets is regarded as a worst case.

Even as the Soviets occupy US worst-case nightmares, some analysts have speculated that the United States and its allies may face a greater risk from a "death by a thousand cuts" than from a toe-to-toe confrontation with the Soviets. Insurgent

revolutions in Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, Rhodesia, Vietnam, and Nicaragua have proved difficult to counter, and the revolutionaries have removed those states from Western influence. Ongoing insurgencies in South Africa, El Salvador, Cambodia, and the Philippines, among other places, have convinced many that such "limited" or insurgent revolutionary wars are the most likely future challenge to American security interests. Such conflicts might otherwise be of little interest except that they often take place in countries possessing vital raw materials or controlling important lines of communication.

Thus the strategist faces yet another dilemma, this time in attempting to coordinate the elements of military strategy. How should the risks be managed? Should the strategist prepare for the worst case or the most likely case? Can one prepare for both possibilities, or would that raise the specter of not being prepared adequately for either case? Resolving such risk-management dilemmas is the essence of military strategy.

CHAPTER 7

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The notion of the "operational level of war" came into considerable vogue in the mid-1980s renewed interest in this concept was a reaction to at least two phenomena. First, those who closely studied Soviet military literature discovered its emphasis on this level of warfare, a level between tactics and higher level military strategy. One of the keys to this discovery was the Soviet use of the term *operational maneuver group*. Scholars also discovered that the Soviets had conceptualized "military art" at three levels (strategy, operations, and tactics) for more than six decades. A second impetus for renewed attention to the operational level of war has been the continuing investigation of the American struggle in Vietnam. Admittedly, US forces had been almost universally successful in the field, but somehow tactical victories did not translate themselves into strategic or political success. There seemed to be a link missing between success in battle and success in war. That missing link we have now come to call the *operational level of war.*

Naturally enough, the level of strategy that equates to the operational level of war is operational strategy. In chapter 2 we defined operational strategy as the art and science of planning, orchestrating, and directing military campaigns within a theater of operations to achieve national security objectives. In chapter 1 we traced the evolution of warfare since the eighteenth century when wars often consisted of only one or two decisive battles. In the intervening years, truly decisive battles have become things of the past, victims of the democratization of warfare that created mass armies and technology which allowed the rapid replacement and

reinforcement of defeated forces. Most modern major wars have become long, drawn-out affairs, often spread over large theaters of operations. They consist not just of battles, or even combinations of related battles (operations), but combinations of operations (campaigns) aimed at particular objectives. The contrast between the eighteenth-century tradition and the realities of modern warfare came to a head in American military history during the Civil War. Early in the war, Union leadership sought to bring the war to a quick conclusion through decisive battles in front of the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia. On the Confederate side, Robert E. Lee was obsessed with the vision of achieving a decisive Napoleonic-style victory. But the war dragged on without decisive victories by either side. Union generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman finally realized that the quest for a decisive victory was illusory and, instead, concentrated on a series of campaigns (e.g., Vicksburg, Atlanta, and Northern Virginia) that destroyed, in a methodical fashion, the Confederates' ability to resist and eventually forced their surrender.

The Civil War also emphasized the importance of coordinating different campaigns, perhaps best illustrated by the synergistic use of sea and land forces in such campaigns as the Union drive to capture Vicksburg. With the advent of air forces in the twentieth century, the situation has become so complex and important that to speak of "coordinating" campaigns is no longer descriptively adequate. *Orchestrating*—molding the disparate parts into a symphonic whole—a much more meaningful term.

Orchestrating Campaigns

Operational strategy links the national-level concerns of military strategy with the battlefield concerns of tactics, a very broad area for decisionmaking. As one would expect, campaign concerns range from broad questions bordering on

military strategy to narrow issues closely related to tactics. To organize our examination, we view the orchestration of campaigns at three interconnected levels, beginning with the broadest campaigns and working toward the most specific. Finally, we can combine these interconnected levels into the complex whole that is theater-level warfare.

Combined Campaigns

For the foreseeable future, any US engagement in theater-level warfare will almost undoubtedly take place overseas since the United States is blessed with nonhostile neighbors and neutral oceans on its borders. Any engagement by American expeditionary forces will involve allies and thus will create the requirement to orchestrate the campaigns of American and allied forces. The amount of orchestration required between allies will vary by the level of participation in the struggle by each ally.

Combined-campaign orchestration involves difficulties that can arise from various sources. First, the United States and its allies may have different political objectives or hidden political agendas that result in divergent military objectives. In World War II, for example, the United States, Great Britain, the Free French, and the Soviet Union (among others) were united in their basic objective of inflicting total defeat on the Axis powers. Great Britain and France, however, also sought to reimpose their control over those portions of their colonial empires that had been occupied by Axis forces. The United States was lukewarm and at times hostile to those objectives. The result was friction between the Allies, particularly in Southeast Asia as the war drew to a close. The Soviets' desire to establish control over the East European nations they liberated from the Nazis led to a number of problems between the Allies, most notably in Poland, over support for the Warsaw uprising and over the composition of the provisional Polish government.

Cultural heritage can also cause problems in orchestrating efforts between allies. Again using an example from World War II, the British were haunted by the memories of World War I trench warfare and the slaughter of British manpower on the fields of Flanders. They vowed never again to suffer such losses as they did in the first battle on the Somme in 1916 when more than 57,000 British soldiers were casualties in the first day of fighting (nearly 20,000 were killed). As a result, the British sought to attack the Axis only on its most exposed and difficult to defend perimeter areas (North Africa, Sicily, Italy) and through strategic bombardment and naval blockade. The British resisted as long as they could a cross-channel invasion into France and into the teeth of German resistance. American military leaders, on the other hand, continually pressed for an early invasion of France because they sought the shortest and fastest road to Berlin and victory.

Apart from differences caused by objectives and culture, military professionals from allied nations can differ in their professional judgment on appropriate methods, timing, and enemy vulnerabilities. The timing of the cross-channel invasion is a case in point that involved not only cultural heritage (the ghosts of the Somme) but also professional military judgment. Another example centers on the conduct of the strategic bombing campaign against Germany. The British favored night area bombing while the Americans favored day precision attacks. At the Casablanca Conference in early 1943, the two Allies agreed to capitalize on the different approaches and bomb around the clock. Unfortunately, the separate campaigns were not well orchestrated. Germany was bombed around the clock, but rarely was a specific target given around the clock treatment, much to the disappointment and anger of American airmen. The bombing raids on the ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt are a case in point. American aviators believed that destroying German ball-bearing production would be a key—perhaps *the* key—to bringing down the German war machine. However,

the costly American daylight attacks on the German factories were not followed up by British night raids on the town of Schweinfurt and its skilled work force. The Royal Air Force (RAF) had bigger fish to fry. Believing that attacks on the ball-bearing industry were a false panacea and that the town of Schweinfurt was insignificant and too difficult to hit at night, the RAF concentrated its raids on major German cities.

Joint Campaigns

Warfare in the twentieth century is three dimensional. Although land, sea, and air combat have unique characteristics and at times each seems to be independent of the others, in truth, many if not most battles, operations, and campaigns are joint in nature. Thus, a primary job of operational strategy is to make synergistic use of the unique capabilities of land, sea, and air forces during specific joint battles, operations, or campaigns. Moreover, operational strategy should meld separate ground, sea, and air campaigns together into a synergistic whole to lead to success in the larger war.

Orchestration of joint campaigns is often hindered by several factors with which the operational strategist must cope. The most fundamental factor is the differing world views held by soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The world looks much different from 30,000 feet and 600 miles per hour than at ground level moving slowly through a jungle. Ground forces face a variety of immediate physical obstacles standing in the way of their objective. As a result, they tend to concentrate on near-term problems – taking the next hill or crossing the next river. In the American Army, the development of the so-called AirLand Battle doctrine that emphasizes looking deep to the enemy's rear areas is something of a departure from traditional concerns. Naval forces are faced with fewer immediate physical obstacles. Their mobility is generally limited only by the world's shorelines. They tend to focus on a "bigger picture," a more strategic view concerned with

of the high seas and narrow seaway chokepoints. Airmen are faced with no real physical barriers except the limitations of their aircraft. Their viewpoint is theaterwide or global in perspective. To airmen, the enemy's rear areas are the front lines.

From different world views emerge different priorities, which is the proximate cause for most problems in orchestrating joint campaigns. To ground forces, lasting success comes only from defeating and destroying an enemy's deployed forces, occupying his land areas, controlling his population, and thus imposing the victor's will on the vanquished. The key to all of this is the immediate land battle that must be, in the view of the ground forces, the first priority and must have first call on *all* available forces.

Those with a naval perspective understand the importance of the land battle but maintain that control of the high seas and narrow chokepoints can control events ashore. This outlook, they argue, is particularly important for such insular nations as the United States, because control of the sea lines of communication is the imperative first step in deploying and sustaining an expeditionary force. Further, control of the seas can strangle the enemy by denying access to vital resources and markets required to maintain economic vitality, which is the basis for modern military power. As a result, to those with a naval perspective, the battle to gain sea control must have the first priority and the struggle to maintain sea control must have a high continuing priority.

Airmen hold that the purpose of military action is to destroy the enemy's ability to wage war—a view similar to that held by ground and naval forces. Airmen differ in that they believe for modern warfare, forces in the field are merely one manifestation of the enemy's ability to wage war. The heart of the enemy's ability lies in the enemy's industrial base. Thus, the first priority in war for air power should be the destruction of the enemy's industrial infrastructure (strategic attack). The second priority should be the destruction of the fruit of the

enemy's war industries, which is already en route to deployed forces (interdiction). Direct support of ground or naval battles may be expedient, but it is a diversion from the most effective use of air power in war. Overlaying these priorities for airmen is, in their view, an overwhelming intermediate objective – gaining sufficient control of the air so that the basic air power priorities can be addressed. Without a sufficient degree of air control, neither strategic attack nor interdiction missions can be carried out effectively and efficiently. Thus to airmen, the overwhelming first priority for air forces is gaining control of the air. Without such control, they believe, all else may be lost.

Differing priorities can lead to major problems in a joint campaign, particularly since resources are limited. For example, while ground forces may be in desperate need of air support, airmen may be in the midst of waging a desperate struggle for control of the air, an enterprise that might well absorb most of the resources that could otherwise be used to support ground forces. Naval air support might also be needed by ground forces, but it, too, could be tied down defending the fleet, the loss of which would mean loss of sea control.

Examples of such problems abound. In World War II American airmen attempted to concentrate on the strategic bombing campaign against Germany, believing that the attacks would eventually bring Germany to its knees. However, much to the frustration of the airmen, resources intended for that campaign were continually diverted to support ground forces attempting to liberate North Africa, to bomb submarine pens to aid in the struggle for control of the Atlantic, and to support the invasion of France.

Priority conflicts and problems exacerbate problems of command and control. Ground, naval, and air forces fear control by commanders who do not understand and appreciate their priorities. There is great reluctance to give total control to theater commanders who might squander scarce resources.

These fears have led to elaborate command arrangements and heated debates within the American military.

The debates over command and control seem particularly important to sailors and airmen. Naval assets are particularly difficult to replace—modern warships require years to produce. In a sense, a naval war could be lost in one afternoon if the fleet were destroyed. To a somewhat lesser extent, the same applies to air forces. Air assets are not easily or quickly replaced and are relatively scarce because of their cost. Figuratively speaking, an air war could also be lost in one calamitous afternoon. Such high stakes contribute to the great reluctance to cede command and control of forces to those who may not be versed in the use of naval and air forces.

The other side of the command and control problem is the broader problem of orchestrating various kinds of forces into synergistic three-dimensional campaigns. Without a firm command and control arrangement, synergies may not be possible. The operational level of war and operational strategy require difficult decisions that leave many less than satisfied, depending on their world view and priorities. Someone must be in firm command and complete control. The American approach to this problem, in addition to appropriately balanced "joint" staffs for unified commands, is to increase the "jointness" of individual military leaders through education, exchange duties, and joint assignments. The objective of these efforts is to broaden the perspectives and knowledge of the officer corps beyond parochial service-based interests.

Overlaying the orchestration of ground, naval, and air campaigns is a new operating medium that provides difficult challenges to the operational strategist. To "true believers," space is the place where future wars will be won or lost. The nature of the space capabilities that should be developed is a matter of considerable controversy. How space capabilities will be orchestrated into ground, naval, and air campaigns remains a difficult question. Whatever the outcome of the

controversy, the advent of space-based capabilities will be a major complication for operational strategy.

Component Campaigns

In the previous section, the discussion centered on the problem of orchestrating the efforts of ground, naval, and air components so that they work well together in joint campaigns. The discussion now turns to the inner workings of the components and the orchestration of campaigns *within* components.

Ground forces have long recognized the synergy that can be achieved by careful orchestration of various efforts in ground campaigns. Infantry, artillery, cavalry, and other ground components have demonstrated time and again that the whole of their orchestrated efforts is greater than the sum of their individual efforts. Achieving synergistic effects often has not been easy. Technology often changes the optimum relationships between the various elements. A case in point is the relationship between infantry and armor. In World War I primitive tanks were used as infantry support weapons. By World War II armor had developed to the point that the relationship reversed itself—much to the chagrin of those who had not realized that technological development permitted and encouraged a different role for armor.

Naval forces have also recognized that synergies can be achieved by careful orchestration. The use of Marines to seize and hold forward naval bases has long been recognized as important to fleet operations. The advent of subsurface forces and their operations in concert with surface fleets changed the nature of naval warfare even before World War II. During World War II, of course, naval aviation changed the nature of war at sea again, working hand-in-hand with surface and subsurface forces.

Although ground and naval operations have extensive histories, aerial operations are, relative to their surface

cousins, newcomers to warfare. As a result, synergies within air operations are not as well recognized. One such synergy is between fighter and bomber aircraft. In World War II American bombers attacked enemy aircraft production facilities as part of the campaign to achieve control of the air. The presence of the bombers drew the enemy air force into the air where it could be engaged. For their part, fighters escorted bombers to their aircraft-plant targets and destroyed enemy aircraft that rose to attack the bombers. The effects of the combined fighter-bomber campaign were much greater than the effects of using either force separately.

Orchestrating component campaigns is not a simple task, nor do definitive guidelines exist. Much depends on technological developments and the strategist's insight in seeing how such developments can affect the optimal relationships between operating elements. A great deal depends on the nature of the enemy, his strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Orchestration is further complicated by the requirements of joint campaigns (e.g., it is difficult for bombers to attack aircraft plants in a campaign for control of the air if they are required to attack submarine pens as part of a joint campaign for control of the sea).

Essence of Operational Strategy: Orchestrating Theater Campaigns

To this point, the discussion concerning the orchestration of campaigns has moved from the macrolevel (combined campaigns) to the microlevel (component campaigns) in an attempt to illustrate the function of operational strategy, considerations for the strategist, and major problem areas. All of this has been only a preliminary to the main event. It is now time to discuss putting all of these things together in theaterwide, mutually supporting, synergistic campaigns. This is the essence of operational strategy.

The goal of operational strategy is to win the theater war; that is, achieve the military objective and ensure that achieving the military objective contributes in a positive sense to the achievement of the political (national) objective. The task of the operational strategist is to orchestrate military campaigns to take maximum advantage of the strengths of friendly forces and to attack crucial enemy targets. At the same time, the operational strategist must protect crucial friendly targets and offset enemy strengths. The strategist must remember that the enemy strategist is attempting to do exactly the same thing. The winner in this battle of wits is determined, to a large extent, by who best uses strengths (orchestrates campaigns) and who most accurately identifies crucial enemy targets.

Orchestrating campaigns has already been addressed in some detail. But what are "crucial targets"? They are best described by the Clausewitzian term *center of gravity*, the seat of the enemy's power. The center of gravity is that on which everything else depends and against which all efforts and energies should be directed.*Although this concept is simple enough in theory, in practice identifying the enemy's center of gravity can be very difficult.

World views and their resultant priorities, as discussed earlier in this chapter, influence strategists' opinions of the enemy's center of gravity. Ground force strategists are likely to believe that the center of gravity is within the enemy's deployed forces or is some particularly important geographic location. Airmen tend to look deeper to the industrial base and to certain targets within that base that seem particularly crucial. Naval personnel lean toward raw material supply lines. Indeed, there may be more than one center of gravity. Ideas about the center of gravity abound—accurate perceptions in practice can be more difficult to find.

Clearly, much depends on who the enemy is. The nature of the war and the objectives of both antagonists may also play

*Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 595-96.

roles. Several examples may help clarify the issue. In World War II the Japanese centers of gravity were relatively clear. Japan was waging a modern mechanized war. Industrial production was crucial to its success. Further, being a resource-poor nation, its ability to import raw materials was also crucially important. Thus, two centers of gravity became quickly evident—raw materials and the industry they fed. If raw materials were cut off, war industries would be useless. If the industries were destroyed, the raw materials would be useless. If either or both were destroyed or reduced, deployed forces could no longer be sustained, replaced, or reinforced, and the Japanese war effort would collapse.

By way of contrast, in the American Civil War, the Confederacy was *not* fighting a high-tech mechanized war. Its lack of industry was, in fact, a major shortcoming. The Confederate center of gravity clearly resided in the Confederate army itself. The army could not be replaced or adequately reinforced because of severely limited manpower, and without the army the Confederacy could not continue to resist. This was not immediately obvious to many Union generals at the beginning of the war. They were more enamored with the capture of Richmond, the Confederate capital. They assumed the Confederacy would collapse in political disarray if the capital city were eliminated.

Perhaps the strangest example comes from the American experience in Vietnam. In that war the United States had overwhelming resources of men, materiel, firepower, and technology. Still, in the end, the United States withdrew in disarray in 1973 and refused to become reinvolved when the final crisis approached in 1975. Although the question is still a matter of considerable controversy, it appears that the American center of gravity in that war was the will of the American people to continue the struggle. Although the war effort had considerable support when large-scale American combat involvement began in 1965, that support gradually declined. On the battlefield, American victories mounted, but

progress in actually winning the war was difficult to judge. The turning point for American morale, particularly on the home front, came in early 1968 when, in spite of three years of continuous American victories, the enemy mounted a major offensive across South Vietnam. The offensive was a failure and, in fact, ended in crushing military defeat for the enemy; but the point was that the enemy was still able to mount such an offensive in spite of American efforts.

These three examples are relatively clear-cut and illustrate the variety of centers of gravity. Correctly identifying the enemy's center of gravity is often not an easy task and generally requires great insight and considerable analysis. There are many less clear-cut examples throughout history.

Attacks against the enemy's center of gravity are the most effective, efficient, and generally the fastest and least expensive method of achieving victory, but wars can be successfully prosecuted without its identification or without effective attacks directly against it. An analogy illustrates this notion. In American football, a team can score by long, tedious offensive drives (campaigns)—"three yards and a cloud of dust" football. This sort of campaign may be the only choice if one cannot detect a significant weakness in the opponent's defense. If a critical weakness (center of gravity) in the opponent's defense is spotted, the offense can take advantage of that weakness and perhaps score in a short campaign consisting of only one play that covers the length of the field. Both kinds of campaigns can have the same result, points on the scoreboard. The longer campaign consumes much time, many resources, and presents numerous opportunities for mistakes. The shorter campaign is clearly more efficient. However, one must have the ability to attack the enemy's center of gravity, which brings us to the subject of how such attacks can be undertaken; that is, how theater campaigns can be orchestrated.

To illustrate the variety of operational strategies and the kinds of campaigns used to attack an enemy's center of gravity,

we return to the three examples discussed earlier to see how the identified centers of gravity were attacked in each instance.

In the Japanese example, the United States took a two-sided approach. To attack the Japanese natural resource vulnerability, the American Navy expended great efforts to destroy the Japanese merchant marine, particularly through submarine warfare. In addition, the drive across the Central Pacific was aimed at cutting off merchant marine traffic from the South and Southwest Pacific, areas that contained a wealth of vital natural resources. In the second stage, when island bases had finally been seized within range, Army Air Forces B-29s bombed Japanese industrial cities, eventually gutting many in fierce firebombing raids. Although this all sounds very straightforward, it was no easy task. It required much hard fighting, major fleet actions, and large-scale ground fighting before the Japanese centers of gravity could be attacked directly.

In the American Civil War, Union forces did not get into high gear until Ulysses S. Grant took command. Grant understood that the Confederate army itself was the enemy's center of gravity. In 1864 he also undertook a two-phased plan. The first phase was to send Gen William T. Sherman south from Chattanooga to capture Atlanta and then on through the heart of the South (across Georgia and then north into the Carolinas) on a rampage of pillage and destruction. In addition to the direct damage to the Confederate heartland, there was the panic among the population of the affected areas. The impact on the front lines in Virginia was a serious morale problem resulting in rapid increase in desertions from those units from the areas ravaged by Sherman. In short, many of the troops simply quit and went home. In conjunction with Sherman's march, Grant began a grinding campaign in northern Virginia (phase two) aimed at the direct destruction of Gen Robert E. Lee's Confederate army. Rather than taking time to recuperate after each battle, or to withdraw and refit after a setback, Grant plunged after Lee without letup, hurling

superior Union manpower against the outnumbered Confederates. Grant often suffered the greater casualties, but Grant could replace his losses. Lee could not. The struggle was not marked by great finesse, but eventually Lee was forced to surrender.

In our third example, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong waged a war calculated only to frustrate the United States. During the critical period from 1965 to 1968, their tactics were designed to prolong the war, to avoid decisive defeat, to hit and run, to inflict casualties, and thus to send body bags home to an increasingly impatient and skeptical American population. They also made clever use of propaganda, manipulating journalists from the West and those who sympathized with their cause. They were aided in no small measure by the South Vietnamese. The South Vietnamese government was admittedly and obviously corrupt, largely incompetent, and led by men who were less than sympathetic characters in the eyes of many Americans.

All of the foregoing illustrates that there are no standard ways of attacking the enemy's center of gravity. It also illustrates that finding the center of gravity is not a magic solution to end a war quickly. Much hard campaigning may be required even to get into a position to attack the center of gravity (e.g., the Japanese case). Once in position, considerable bloody fighting may still be required (e.g., the Civil War case).

But consider the alternatives. Had the Americans not gone for the Japanese jugular, they would have faced an even longer, slower, and bloodier road to Tokyo, a discouraging prospect and one in which the American people might have grown weary. If Grant and Sherman had not achieved obviously significant results in 1864, Lincoln might not have been reelected. (Significant peace candidates opposed his reelection and there was widespread war-weariness and dissatisfaction in the North.) As to Vietnam, the enemy had little choice. There was never much of a possibility that the

Vietcong or North Vietnamese could defeat the Americans on the battlefield. (We discuss Vietnam in detail in the next chapter.)

It is also significant that where Americans met with success in the examples noted previously, success came not with one sweeping campaign or battle but through well-coordinated and mutually supporting campaigns. Few modern wars are quickly settled by a decisive battle or even one decisive campaign. Campaigns must be orchestrated to achieve the required results and that is the essence of operational strategy.

All of the foregoing discussion applies to "conventional" warfare; that is, warfare fought without nuclear weapons and fought on what can be called the "European" model. Much of the discussion may apply across the entire spectrum of conflict; however, there are two special cases, two kinds of warfare in which some of the conventional rules and wisdom do not apply. Both revolutionary insurgent warfare and nuclear warfare *fundamentally* different from conventional war on the European model. In the next two chapters, we turn our attention to these special cases.

CHAPTER 8

INSURGENT WARFARE STRATEGY*

Insurgents wage revolutionary warfare and, for the most part, insurgencies are revolutions. Revolutionary insurgent warfare has played a major role in the military history of the twentieth century, particularly in the so-called third world. In the earlier part of this century, insurgencies often resulted from emerging nationalism and anticolonialism within the empires of the European powers. Political and economic inequities played a major role in motivating these anticolonial movements, and the spark for revolution was often provided by perceptions of minimal chances for political and economic betterment. The postcolonial era did not produce much improvement to the situation. Many colonial administrations in the third world were replaced by indigenous regimes that were more repressive, corrupt, and inept than their colonial predecessors. Thus, the stage was set for further revolutionary wars.

Although there are many examples of both colonial and postcolonial insurgencies, the conflict in Vietnam exemplifies both types of struggles. In what is often called the First Vietnam War, Vietnamese insurgents defeated their French colonial masters in a prolonged struggle but were forced to settle for a partial victory. After the French defeat in 1954, the Geneva Accords divided Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel between Ho Chi Minh's victorious Vietminh in the North and a non-Communist regime supported by the United States in

* A considerable portion of this chapter is taken from Colonel Drew's "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: American Military Dilemmas and Doctrinal Proposals," published as a CADRE Paper by Air University Press, 1988.

the South. In the Second Vietnam War (known to most Americans as *the* Vietnam War), southern insurgents, supported by the North, sought to overthrow the southern regime and throw out its US supporters.

In the postcolonial era, many insurgencies have involved the superpowers to one degree or another. The United States and the Soviets have, time after time, backed opposing sides in attempts to gain influence in the third world and wrest advantage in international power politics. As a result, it is all too easy to forget that insurgencies are, first and foremost, internal struggles for political power and only secondarily East versus West confrontations. They are, after all, civil wars de facto if not de jure. For example, Americans, because of the circumstances and politics of the struggle, often forget that even the Second Vietnam War can be seen as a civil war. From the viewpoint of the United States, North Vietnam was committing aggression against South Vietnam, a viewpoint that provided justification for American intervention. However, from the perspective of the North Vietnamese and the southern insurgents they supported, the struggle was a civil war for political control of greater Vietnam.

Nature of Insurgent Warfare

Revolutionary insurgent warfare has had many theorists. They differ from one another in some respects, but they agree far more than they differ. The fountainhead for most third world revolutionaries is Mao Tse-tung, who put his ideas to the test in the long civil war in China as he attempted to overthrow the government of Chiang Kai-shek. The fact that he was ultimately successful has given Mao's theories great credibility.

Mao visualized peasant-based "peoples' revolutionary wars" that were protracted struggles waged to wear down and discredit the government while at the same time gaining support from a larger and larger proportion of the peasantry.

By basing the insurgency in the countryside and by expanding its support, Mao ensured that the government would become ever more isolated, impotent, and surrounded in the cities. Mao viewed the struggle as a flexible three-phased conflict.

In the first stage, the insurgents establish secure operating bases in remote areas (or in sanctuaries across an international border) virtually inaccessible to government troops. Stage two involves ever-increasing guerrilla warfare – attacking and overrunning government outposts, seizing arms, demoralizing government forces and their supporters, and demonstrating the government's inability to control and protect the populace. In the third and final stage, the balance of power shifts to the insurgents who can then openly take to the field in large units using conventional tactics to destroy demoralized government forces and overthrow the government. Although Mao envisioned progressive stages, his concept is flexible. If the situation dictates, the revolutionaries can fall back to a previous stage and work to create a more favorable opportunity for progress.

However, according to Mao, military action is only a small part of a complex program designed to disaffect the population from the government. Revolutionary warfare relies on a sophisticated package of political, psychological, and economic programs all designed to take advantage of grievances against the existing power structure and to win support (or at least neutrality) from the population. Winning that support is the key to changing the correlation of forces to favor the insurgents.

Mao's basic theory of insurgent warfare has been adapted and modified by other insurgent theorists (e.g., Che Guevara in Cuba and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam) to fit local conditions and cultural differences. As a result, every insurgency has its unique characteristics; however, successful insurgencies also have had certain characteristics in common that constitute the basis of insurgent warfare doctrine. Four characteristics are particularly significant to the American military: the

protractedness of such struggles, the central role of the insurgent political infrastructure, the subsidiary role of insurgent military forces, and the use of guerrilla tactics in military operations.

The first characteristic of successful insurgencies is that they are almost always protracted struggles. Rebels attempting to overthrow an entrenched government usually cannot achieve a quick victory. Time, however, becomes a two-edged sword in the hands of an insurgent, and both edges cut into support for the government and its allies. On one hand, the rebels require time to build their support and strength relative to the government they seek to overthrow. On the other hand, insurgents use time as a weapon in itself to weaken that same government. Every day that an insurgent movement continues to exist (not to mention continues to operate and grow) discredits the government and its ability to govern and control its own destiny. Every day that an insurgent movement continues to exist adds a degree of legitimacy to the insurgent cause and can eventually create an air of inevitability surrounding an eventual victory for the rebels. In Vietnam, both France and later the United States found that their enemies used time as a potent weapon. The Vietminh and later the Vietcong/North Vietnamese protracted their struggles, waiting for the French and Americans to tire of the endless bloodletting and to abandon their efforts.

The second characteristic of insurgencies is the central role played by their infrastructures. The primary source of an insurgency's strength is its underground organization—the hostile political infrastructure within the target population. This infrastructure is the single most important ingredient in the insurgent recipe for success and performs several functions vital to the survival, growth, and eventual success of the insurgency: intelligence gathering and transmission; provision of supplies and financial resources; recruitment; political expansion and penetration; sabotage, terrorism, and intimidation; and establishment of a shadow government.

Accurate and timely intelligence is vital to insurgent success in both political and military actions. Well-placed agents within the government and its military can provide information that, at once, can make government counterinsurgency actions ineffectual and increase the effectiveness of insurgent actions. Even those agents or sympathizers who are not well placed can provide significant information to the insurgent command structure simply by observing government troop movements or reporting the unguarded conversations of minor government officials.

Insurgent sympathizers provide their military forces with important supplies that are readily available within the society under attack. They can obtain simple medical supplies and clothing in small amounts without suspicion. For those supplies not readily available, "taxes" voluntarily paid by sympathizers and coerced from others provide the means to obtain such needs from foreign sources or corrupt government officials.

If the proselytizing efforts of the insurgent underground succeed and the infrastructure spreads through the population, the government is obviously weakened. In addition, as it spreads through the society, the infrastructure taps into a larger and larger manpower pool from which to draw recruits (volunteers and conscripts) for the rebel armed forces. This phenomenon explains why it is possible for the size of the rebel military force to increase despite heavy casualties inflicted by government forces. Indeed, if the government concentrates its attention on the insurgent military threat, and thus provides the infrastructure the opportunity to grow unimpeded, the government's military problem is exacerbated.

Members of the underground are often in positions from which they can effectively conduct sabotage operations against government resources and installations. Moreover, because they are embedded deeply within the general population, clandestine insurgent cells can effectively engage in or abet

acts of terrorism designed to intimidate portions of the population. These activities further weaken support for the government (particularly if the perpetrators are not apprehended) and weaken the will of the population to resist insurgent efforts.

Finally, the insurgent infrastructure can establish its own government as a rival to the authority of the government under siege. This is a particularly effective ploy if certain geographic areas are effectively under the control of the insurgents. A shadow government challenges the legitimacy of the established government by virtue of its announced political program (calling for solutions to the grievances that produced the insurgency), its control in certain areas, and the inability of the government in power to destroy the insurgency. Further, a shadow government can provide a "legitimate" conduit for support from friendly foreign powers.

The rebel political infrastructure feeds on the perceived grievances that led to the birth of the insurgent movement. The infrastructure is difficult for the government to attack because it is essentially "bulletproof." (One does not attack a three-person insurgent cell in a Saigon high school with heavy bombers or artillery.) Moreover, if the infrastructure is well constructed (e.g., small cells with little knowledge of other cells), government forces will have great difficulty in rooting out and destroying the infrastructure with nonmilitary means (i.e., counterintelligence activities and police actions).

The importance of the insurgent infrastructure is mirrored in the third characteristic of successful insurgencies: the subsidiary importance of insurgent military actions. Without question, rebel military actions play an important role in the insurgency, but success on the battlefield is not crucial to the success of the insurgent movement. This explains why insurgent forces can lose virtually every battle and still win the war.

The fourth and final characteristic successful insurgencies have in common is the use of guerrilla tactics. Guerrilla tactics

are the classic ploy used by the weak against the strong. Rather than military operations designed to win a quick victory (as in the conventional mold), guerrilla tactics are designed to avoid a decisive defeat at the hands of a stronger enemy. While conventional forces are constructed around the mobility of large units, guerrilla forces base their operations on the mobility of the individual soldier. Operating in small units, guerrillas avoid presenting themselves as tempting targets for government forces that usually have vastly superior firepower at their disposal. As a result, guerrillas negate the major advantage of government forces. Guerrillas fight only when it is to their advantage to fight, often quickly concentrating a superior force against an isolated government unit, attacking and then disappearing as quickly and mysteriously as they appeared. Rarely do forces using guerrilla tactics attempt to hold terrain, for to do so invites destruction by superior enemy forces.

The purposes of the guerrilla war are manifold. Even if militarily unsuccessful, insurgent military actions shift government attention away from the activities of the insurgent political infrastructure so that the underground can continue to grow and spread with minimal opposition. Guerrilla attacks harass, demoralize, and embarrass the government, its forces, and its allies. Guerrilla actions can elicit draconian reprisals from a frustrated government. Although reprisals can take a heavy toll of insurgents, they almost inevitably exact a fearful price from bystanders. As a result, such reprisals are often counterproductive because they further alienate the population from the government.

If successful, rebel operations using guerrilla tactics can achieve several favorable results. Support for the insurgents increases or the people take a neutral stance because the government is unable to protect itself or the people. Fatigue and war weariness set in as the struggle becomes more protracted, particularly if the government seems to be making little if any headway against the guerrilla forces. Desertions

from the government ranks increase and the underground infrastructure continues to expand, thus compounding the government's problem almost geometrically. Eventually, the correlation of forces changes in favor of the insurgents. Insurgent forces mass into large units, using conventional tactics and administer the coup de grâce in rapid order.

Fundamental Differences

When taken together, the unique aspects of insurgent warfare indicate that such struggles are *fundamentally* different from conventional warfare. Rather than a large war writ small, insurgent warfare is at least as different from conventional war as we believe conventional war to be different from nuclear war. Two fundamental differences are of interest here.

Perhaps the most important difference is that in an insurgency, both antagonists have virtually the same center of gravity. The center of an insurgency's strength and the key to its survival and growth is the covert political infrastructure deeply embedded in and permeating the general population. Without some support from the people or at least their neutrality in the struggle (neutrality is a net benefit to the insurgent and is, in effect, passive support), the underground–infrastructure would be quickly exposed and eliminated. Without an infrastructure, the insurgency has no political arm, is devoid of its intelligence apparatus, and bereft of its principal source of military manpower and logistical support. The besieged government's power also ultimately depends on the support and loyalty of the general population. In the long run (and insurgencies certainly qualify as long-run situations), no government can survive without the acquiescence of the people–least of all, a government actively opposed by an attractive and aggressive insurgency. Thus the centers of gravity of each side in an insurgency are located within the general population. For the insurgency, the center

is its infrastructure with its active and tacit supporters. For the government, it is its supporters. The groups comingle and are virtually indistinguishable.

In conventional warfare, military professionals have long accepted the concept of centers of gravity. The basic military objective in such warfare is to conduct operations that lead to the destruction of the enemy's center of gravity while at the same time protecting one's own vital centers. However in insurgent warfare, the existence of comingled centers of gravity calls this basic military doctrine into serious question. Using traditional military means—fire and steel on a target—to destroy the insurgent's center of gravity may well also destroy one's own vital center.

A second unique feature of insurgent warfare is that insurgent military forces win when they do not lose. Although forces using guerrilla tactics often "lose" small tactical engagements, their dispersed nature and their focus on small-unit actions are designed to avoid anything approaching a decisive defeat. Their survival in the face of often vastly superior government strength adds to their credibility. Conversely, conventional military forces lose when they do not win. The failure to defeat decisively a military force over which they have great advantages in firepower discredits the government's military and the government as a whole.

The kind of military warfare conducted by insurgents is the antithesis of conventional warfare. Conventional military forces have continually sought, particularly over the past two centuries, ways to concentrate forces in time and space to achieve quick and decisive victories. Insurgent military forces take the opposite approach by dispersing in space and protracting in time to avoid decisive defeat. While conventional forces attempt to achieve victory by acting faster than the enemy can react, insurgent guerrilla forces seek victory by acting longer than the enemy can react. While conventional forces attempt to provide their enemy with

insufficient time, guerrilla forces try their enemy's patience—time becomes a weapon.

Counterinsurgency Concepts

From the foregoing, it is clear that countering an insurgency is no easy task. Unfortunately, research on this subject is in its infancy in the US military. We can, however, derive some concepts for a counterinsurgency strategy with considerable confidence.

The first and most clearly evident concept is that any successful counterinsurgency strategy must incorporate a three-pronged approach. Sources of popular unrest must he excised, the covert infrastructure must be identified and destroyed, and insurgent military forces must be defeated. Each of these tasks is critically important.

The second concept points out that population control and intelligence gathering are key factors in the implementation of a successful counterinsurgency strategy. Superior intelligence operations are always an important factor in military operations and are even more important when attempting to defeat forces employing guerrilla tactics because guerrillas are exceedingly difficult to find and bring to battle. Additionally, the identification and destruction of the covert insurgent infrastructure requires criminal intelligence operations (identification, correlation, tracking, and apprehension). The intelligence task is much more difficult if population movement is not tightly controlled. A key ingredient of intelligence, when working against the infrastructure, is knowing who is who and who is supposed to be where—and identifying aberrations to the pattern. This knowledge can be gained much more easily in a controlled environment. Further, population control presupposes a high degree of security within the controlled area. If effective control and security exist, those who might otherwise be

intimidated by the infrastructure may feel confident enough to aid in the identification of insurgent agents.

The third concept is that the single most important factor in countering an insurgency is time—just as time is the most important tool in an insurgent's kit. Counterinsurgent actions are far more likely to succeed if they begin early, long before the situation becomes a crisis. In the same light, counterinsurgent actions should be sudden and decisive, rather than gradual and graduated actions that provide time for insurgent reaction.

From all of the foregoing, it is clear that the complex world of insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare strategy is a "special case" for the strategist. At the other extreme of the so-called spectrum of conflict is another special case, nuclear strategy, a subject to which we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER 9

NUCLEAR STRATEGY

The original American research into the weapon potential of the atom was commissioned in 1939 by President Roosevelt in response to reports of German nuclear investigations and continued after reliable intelligence concluded the Nazi effort had been abandoned. The result was a successful fission reaction under the stands of the University of Chicago football stadium in 1942. The first successful nuclear weapon demonstration occurred in the New Mexican desert in May 1945, and on 6 and 9 August 1945 the only employment of nuclear weapons in anger was consummated with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world, especially the world of military affairs, has never been quite the same.

The enormous impact of nuclear weaponry required considerable adjustment by those people who plan military strategy. Part of the problem was that even the nuclear scientists who designed the original devices had only a vague idea of what they had created. Edward Teller, a leading member of the scientific team, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 20 August 1963:

> You may not know it, but on the day when the first nuclear explosion was fired, no serious prediction had succeeded in guessing at the real size of the explosion. All of us underestimated it. After four years of strenuous effort, of theoretical calculations, of careful design we did not succeed in predicting what was going to happen.*

*Edward Teller, "The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty," in *Problems of National Strategy: A Book of Readings*, ed. Henry A. Kissinger (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 412.

Analyses of the effects of nuclear bombing were profoundly sobering. In deciding to attack Japanese cities with these weapons, President Truman and his advisers also underestimated their destructive effect and viewed nuclear munitions as an extension, albeit dramatic, of developments in strategic bombing that had evolved during the war. In one sense, nuclear bombs simply armed advocates of strategic bombing theory with an explosive device that would adequately and efficiently carry out the promises of aerial bombardment proclaimed by prewar enthusiasts. Others argued that nuclear weapons were unique and that deterrence of nuclear attack was now the major military task. In the ensuing debate, a whole new branch of and outlook on military strategy was born.

Three initial points must be made about the evolution of thought on nuclear weapons. First, most sources agree that nuclear weapons create such a qualitative departure from conventional weaponry that their employability is highly questionable. Indeed, the entire body of nuclear thought is often described as the study of nuclear deterrence, hence questioning or denying a warfighting purpose for these weapons. As we shall see in a subsequent section, the basic question underlying this aspect of the nuclear debate is whether nuclear war could be limited. Second, these judgments about the consequences of employing nuclear weapons lead to a general agreement that this area of strategy is unique. The applicability of strategies and doctrine governing other military instruments has been deemed inadequate or irrelevant for understanding nuclear dynamics. The result is development of nuclear strategies of deterrence either divorced from, or only tangentially related to, prior strategic and doctrinal formulations. Third, the area of deterrence theorizing has been largely left to civilians. Whereas strategies and doctrines of aerial bombardment before World War II had been developed by professional military theoreticians, strategies regarding nuclear weapons

(whose use is a form of aerial bombardment) have evolved almost entirely outside the professional military community.

These factors have tended to make nuclear strategy a distinct and independent area in the study of strategy. The area abounds with complex concepts and ideas that are, at first encounter, forbidding and alien, even for people with a detailed knowledge of nonnuclear (conventional) strategy. To understand the role of nuclear strategy in overall strategy and the dynamics of nuclear thought requires examining three separate but interrelated topics: the evolution of the nuclear age and how evolving reality has affected thinking; concepts of nuclear strategy and their relationship to a condition of nuclear deterrence; and the debate about appropriate nuclear strategy.

Dynamics of Nuclear Evolution

The advent of nuclear bombs provided justification for the lavish claims made for strategic bombing during the period between the world wars, but with effects so horrendous as to repel mankind. In one sense, the nuclear age vindicated Mitchell, Douhet, and their followers; the atomic, and later the thermonuclear (hydrogen), bomb provided the capability to bring an adversary to its knees without engagements between land or naval forces and with far greater efficiency than even the incendiary bombs used on Dresden. As nuclear arsenals grew and became more sophisticated, this capability reached such proportions that application of strategic bombing principles meant societal devastation. Consequently, deterrence from employment of nuclear weapons became the primary purpose for their possession.

Although development and change have been continuous and dynamic elements of the thermonuclear age, four events stand out as most important in defining the "ground rules" for nuclear strategy: development of nuclear (atomic or fission) weapons themselves, advent of the hydrogen (fission-fusion)

bomb, perfection and deployment of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and development of the multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV). Collectively, these events have provided the context for nuclear deterrence, but each has had a different impact.

Atomic Bomb

Although early atomic weapons greatly increased the destructive power of airborne munitions, the changes they introduced in strategies of military employment were matters of degree, although admittedly a high degree. The primary difference was a quantum increase in the destructive capacity of an airborne "launcher": a single airplane armed with a single atomic bomb could now accomplish area destruction formerly attainable only by repeated mass aerial bombardment. As Bernard Brodie and others quickly realized, this capability alone substantially changed the calculation of warfare. First, it made massive destruction of industry and civilian populations incredibly more rapid and "efficient," thereby fulfilling Douhet's prophecies. Second, these weapons accelerated "demilitarization" of traditional warfare. The swift cataclysm produced by a single atomic bomb meant that devastation, formerly possible only after a victor had vanquished an opponent's armed forces, could be accomplished independently of the military situation on the ground and at sea.

These effects were, in large measure, what air power enthusiasts before World War II had maintained would be the impact of strategic bombardment on warfare. As a qualitative change in the military calculus, however, these effects were mitigated by two factors. First, the original atomic devices were crude and difficult to build. The bombs that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki weighed approximately five tons apiece, greatly strained the capacities of the B-29 bombers that carried them to the targets, and developed 15 to 20 kilotons

(thousand tons of TNT equivalent) of destructive force. Detonation of the second bomb temporarily exhausted the world's arsenal of nuclear weapons. In comparison, an enhanced-radiation (neutron) warhead weighing roughly 30 pounds can develop a one-kiloton blast; the world's arsenal of weapons now numbers in the tens of thousands; and they have a destructive capacity in excess of *one-quarter million times* all the bombs used in World War II.

Second, conventional bombers were the only means of delivering atomic bombs, and defenses could succeed in interdicting bombers. Thus, the result was more quantitative than qualitative. Atomic bombs were certainly a great deal more powerful than conventional bombs, but questions about defense strategy, detection, interception, and losses were fundamentally the same. The atomic bomb raised the ante considerably, but the rules of the game were essentially unchanged.

Hydrogen Bomb

The hydrogen bomb, known also as the "superbomb" at the time, again produced a quantum increase in the amount of destructive power that could be produced by a single bomb. Fission bombs had been measured in kilotons, but the new hydrogen bombs could produce explosions measured in megatons (*millions* of tons of TNT). The destructive potential of even only a few weapons penetrating defenses became much more formidable, and people began to wonder whether any conflict fought with nuclear weaponry was winnable in any meaningful manner.

The "bigger bang for the buck" and weight produced by hydrogen weapons combined with improved warhead designs raised the possibility of using different means of delivery. The candidates were strategic rockets, which had first been used by Germany during World War II.

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

Rocket research had continued after the war, but weapon applications were limited by the weight and size of early bombs. Using the new developments, rocket programs accelerated, and in 1957 the Soviets successfully tested a ballistic missile and launched Sputnik into space. The quantitative change had become qualitative.

Introduction of ballistic missile delivery systems fundamentally altered traditional notions about defense. Although the prospects of nuclear warfare had raised terrible specters of death and destruction, the fact remained that, before the advent of ballistic missiles, it was possible to design a defensive strategy to intercept enough of an incoming enemy force to minimize the resulting destruction. A society absorbing a nuclear attack might be greatly damaged, but it could still reasonably expect to survive.

Ballistic missiles changed that expectation and, in the process, Americans recognized a fundamental qualitative difference between bombardment by manned aircraft and ballistic missiles. The basis of the change was realization that, at the time, defense against ballistic missiles was impossible. John F. Kennedy described the problem during the 1960 election campaign as trying "to shoot a bullet with another bullet." It was no longer reasonable to expect to be able to defend the homeland. Realization that the Soviets could reach the United States with rockets against which we could not defend was shocking. If the United States could no longer avoid devastation in a nuclear war, then the only way to avoid the consequences of nuclear war was to ensure that war did not occur at all. Deterrence became the prime (many would argue sole) purpose of nuclear weapons.

Ballistic missiles also raised questions about how to implement a deterrence strategy. In traditional military thinking, the deterrent purpose of military force had been based on making one or both of two threats. On one hand, a potential adversary could be deterred from attacking by the

credible threat that one's forces would thwart his aggressive design and hence render the effort futile (a denial threat). On the other hand, an aggressor could be dissuaded by the believable threat that one would punish him in excess of any potential gain (a punishment threat).

The denial threat has effective defense as its basic ingredient. Thus it is an unrealistic threat when applied to a weapon against which there is no defense. The punishment threat is based on devastating retaliation. Since both sides possessed devastating weapons against which neither could defend, the basic deterrent threat had to be punishment; hence, the so-called balance of terror emerged.

Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle

Deployment of MIRV (by the United States in 1970 and by the Soviet Union in 1975) was an event of similar magnitude. By increasing the number of warheads that could be delivered by a single missile (known as fractionation), MIRVs allowed both for rapid multiplication of the number of warheads in each arsenal (although with a parallel decrease in total megatonnage) and for a consequent increase in the number and kinds of targets at which each side could aim its weapons. Combined with great strides in inertial-guidance technology during the 1970s, MIRVs provided the capability to strike the other side's nuclear forces. Thus, MIRV and accuracy increases spawned practical counterforce targeting.

Many analysts believe this was the single most destabilizing event of the nuclear age, because it allows contemplation of attacking an enemy with nuclear weapons to destroy retaliatory ability. With confidence in this counterforce capability, one can begin to think about waging nuclear war and winning in the sense of surviving due to "offensive damage limitation" (destroying enemy weapons before they can be used). This is considered destabilizing because it creates circumstances in which it might be tempting to cross the

nuclear threshold and start a nuclear war with a preemptive attack.

An innovation that has not yet occurred—successful ballistic missile defense (BMD)—would also be a seminal event for nuclear strategy. If such a system were as effective as some authorities expect the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to be, it would certainly produce a qualitative change in strategic calculations. Other than freeing Americans from the certainty of annihilation in a nuclear exchange, effective missile defense would broaden deterrence by reintroducing the possibility of denying an aggressor's attainment of objectives in a nuclear attack. As shown in a later section, addition of such a capability would be traumatic for established notions about deterrence.

Basic Concepts and Relationships

Theorists of nuclear strategy have developed their own language and logic. Some of their terms and concepts are drawn, directly or indirectly, from more conventional military considerations, but others are unique to the field. This section begins by defining and exploring basic ideas, moves to relationships between concepts, and concludes with the "conventional wisdom" about how these ideas contribute to the maintenance of nuclear deterrence.

Definitions

The basic concern in developing nuclear strategy is finding the best means to convince potential adversaries not to use their nuclear forces. From this definition of the problem, three basic conceptual matters flow: plans for using nuclear force (declaratory strategy), potential targets for nuclear forces (employment strategy), and the required nature (capability) of nuclear forces to fulfill their defined roles.

A nation's *declaratory strategy* is its stated plan for using nuclear weapons in the perceived imminence or actuality of nuclear war. In view of the potentially devastating consequences of a nuclear exchange and very real questions about whether a nuclear war could be controlled short of all-out exchange, emphasis at this level has not focused on sustained use and application of nuclear force. (Some critics of strategy maintain this aspect should receive increased emphasis.) Rather, the strategies that have evolved emphasize usage at the onset of nuclear hostilities and a dichotomy has emerged between those theorists who prefer preemptive and retaliatory strategies. A preemptive (first-strike) strategy is the intention to use one's nuclear forces *before* having absorbed a nuclear attack by an adversary. A retaliatory (second-strike) strategy is the determination to employ nuclear weapons only in response to nuclear attack.

The kind of declaratory strategy a nation adopts is determined partly by, and helps to shape, its targeting priorities. Nuclear strategists have developed an antiseptic way of designating nuclear targets by distinguishing between countervalue and counterforce targets. *Countervalue* targets are those things people value, most notably their lives and the productive capabilities that directly support and sustain people and that would be necessary for postwar recovery. Countervalue targets include population centers, industrial complexes, power-generating facilities, and civilian transportation and communications networks. *Counterforce* targets are those things that contribute directly to the ability to wage war. They include a nation's strategic nuclear forces and significant conventional forces that could be employed in response to a nuclear attack. A distinction is often made between so-called hard and soft counterforce targets. Hard targets are such things as reinforced missile silos and command-and-communication bunkers; soft targets are such objectives as airfields, submarine bases, and military posts.

The counterforce-countervalue distinction is neither entirely new nor completely meaningful. The debate about attacking civilian populations (countervalue) or military targets (counterforce) was a prominent part of the strategic bombing controversy in World War II concerning "area" versus "precision" bombing. The distinction is now more rhetorical than real given the destructive capability of nuclear weapons. Many counterforce targets in cities (countervalue targets) cannot be attacked with nuclear weapons without producing extensive collateral damage. Put more simply, a nuclear attack against Wright-Patterson AFB (a counterforce target) would largely decimate Dayton, Ohio (a countervalue target). Moreover, a case can be made for designating some targets (Soviet or American political leadership, for instance) as either counterforce or countervalue targets.

Moving to the next term to be defined, *nuclear capability* refers to the amount of a nation's nuclear power, its means of delivering that power, and its nuclear force's vulnerability to interception or preemptive attack. The distinction is typically made, in ideal terms, between a first-strike capability and a second-strike capability.

A *first-strike capability* is the ability to attack another nation's capability to retaliate. Thus, true first-strike capability emphasizes the ability to destroy counterforce targets and the term is often used synonymously for counterforce capability (countervalue targets may or may not be destroyed in a first strike; they are more or less beside the point). The point of a first-strike capability is to deprive an adversary of the retaliatory, punitive deterrent threat.

A *second-strike capability* is the capacity to absorb any possible nuclear attack and to retaliate with sufficient force to inflict unacceptable damage on the attacker. Thus a second-strike capability implements the punishment deterrent threat. Note that second-strike targets tend to be countervalue targets both to punish and because most of the

enemy's counterforce targets (first-strike systems) will have been used in the initial attack.

Attainment of first- or second-strike capabilities requires development of forces with different characteristics. The primary characteristics of a first-strike force are size and accuracy. A first-strike force should be numerically larger, at least in terms of warheads, than its adversary, since one cannot assume a one-to-one kill ratio between attacking and attacked systems. The exact ratio depends on various measures of reliability and accuracy. Accuracy itself is critical against counterforce targets because any weapon system not destroyed can be used in retaliation. Since, by definition, first-strike capability requires the ability to disarm an opponent, anything that raises questions about eliminating retaliatory forces dilutes the capability.

Second-strike capability emphasizes invulnerability (survivability) and penetrability as primary characteristics. Invulnerability means that a force can survive a preemptive attack through such means as hardened silos, mobility, and alert. *Penetrability* means that the force must be able to get through defensive barriers to destroy its targets. Any enemy capability that degrades either characteristic (e.g., an enemy ability to destroy retaliatory systems before they can be launched or effective active defenses) dilutes second-strike capability.

Relationships between Concepts

Notions about capability, declaratory strategy, and targeting are relational in at least two distinct ways. First, the ideas, particularly ideas about capability, are relational in the sense that they gain meaning in large measure from their comparison with the capabilities of a potential adversary. Second, within a state's calculation of nuclear strategy, the three concepts are interrelated: capability influences choice

of strategy and vice versa, and capability and strategy influence target priorities.

Although forces can be and are designed primarily to endow them with first- or second-strike capability by emphasizing one set of required characteristics, actual capability can be judged only by comparing it with an adversary's capabilities. A given amount and type of force can constitute a first-strike or second-strike capability or it can be inadequate for either, depending on the forces it confronts. An example may illustrate this point.

Assume nation X possesses 50 nuclear warheads deliverable only by conventional aircraft, that it has neither active defenses nor adequate warning capability to get its aircraft airborne in the event of an attack, and that it is calculating its posture against two foes. Foe A has 50 nuclear warheads that can be delivered by Polaris-type sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) from outside the range of X's bombers. Against foe A, X has neither a first-strike capability since it cannot destroy A's SLBMs nor a second-strike capability since A can destroy X's bombers in a preemptive attack (nation X's forces lack survivability). However, foe A has both a first-strike and a second-strike capability against X because A can destroy X's forces or ride out an initial attack. Foe B, on the other hand, has forces similar to nation X—a moderate number of warheads conventionally deliverable. Both nation X's aircraft and foe B's aircraft can reach one another's cities, but they do not have adequate range to reach one another's airfields. In this case, neither side has a first-strike capability since neither can destroy the other's counterforce targets through a preemptive strike, but both have second-strike capability because they can launch devastating counterstrikes. Thus, nation X's forces constitute a second-strike capability against one opponent and neither a first- nor second-strike capability against another.

Capability and declaratory strategy are also highly interrelated and interdependent. One's capability largely

dictates one's strategic choices, including selection of a firing strategy. The declaratory strategy a nation wants to follow also influences the kind of force capability it develops. In turn, these determinations will, or at least should, largely determine targeting priorities. An example may help illustrate the point.

Most people remember the magazine advertisements designed to sell a body-building course featuring a "97-pound weakling" who was constantly having sand kicked in his face by a large, muscular bully. Examine for a moment the positions of the bully and the weakling.

The bully obviously has the advantage because his superior musculature affords him much greater physical capability. In fact, he has a first-strike capability since he can render the weakling helpless and incapable of retaliation. He also has a second-strike capability because he can absorb an attack by the weakling and still subdue him (retaliate effectively).

The comparative state of capabilities has strategic implications. The bully may safely choose a preemptive strategy (kick sand in the weakling's face) or a retaliatory strategy (stand over the weakling, flex his muscles, and see if the weakling attacks). The bully's overwhelming capability gives him the luxury of adopting whichever employment strategy he likes.

The weakling's situation is less fortunate. He cannot count on being able to attack and overpower the bully (he lacks first-strike capability), nor can he be sure that he can absorb an attack by the bully and retaliate (he also lacks second-strike capability). The weakling's options are thus constrained and unappealing. The passive strategy of waiting to see what the bully will do is humiliating but may be safe (the bully may not attack). This second-strike strategy is risky (the weakling can do nothing to prevent the bully from attacking) and in retrospect (after an attack) would seem a decidedly poor choice. If, on the other hand, the weakling adopts a preemptive strategy, he will probably lose the fight, but he has some incentives to give it a try. He might land a "lucky punch" and

knock out the bully or, failing in that, he will at least have the satisfaction (however fleeting) of having gotten his "licks in." Of course, the weakling could improve his situation by taking the body-building course. By following that course, the weakling can transform himself into a magnificent physical specimen who will no longer have to put up with the bully.

This example illustrates one way in which capability and strategy are related. Before taking the body-building course, the weakling had insufficient capabilities for either a first or second strike, thereby limiting his strategic options. Capability dictated strategy. After taking the course, the weakling's enhanced capability presumably widened his strategic choices. Strategic considerations thus dictated a change in capability.

We can now examine more formally the interrelationship between nuclear capability and strategy, adding targeting priority implications of different combinations. Examining the cells in figure 3 will help clarify the situation.

		Capability Possessed		
		First Strike	Second Strike	Neither
Declaratory Strategy	Preemption	1 Credible	3 Illogical	5 ?
	Retaliation	2 Illogical	4 Credible	6 ?

Figure 3. Capability/Strategy Relationships.

Cell 1 represents the combination of first-strike capability and a preemptive declaratory strategy. The combination is meaningful because possession of the capability means an adversary can be effectively disarmed in a preemptive strike (victory). This combination requires adopting a counterforce targeting priority.

Cells 2 and 3 represent unlikely possibilities. Endowing a first-strike force with the added characteristics of a second-strike force might allow adopting a retaliatory strategy

(cell 2), but it presents an anomaly. Since a first-strike capability means that an adversary's forces can be destroyed, why should one wait to absorb an attack that could be avoided by preempting? If a nation possesses that capability, the retaliatory declaratory strategy is simply unbelievable from the viewpoint of an adversary. The combination of second-strike capability and preemptive strategy (cell 3) is a virtual contradiction in terms. If a force has counterforce (first-strike) capability, it is not a second-strike force. A second-strike force, on the other hand, has neither the targeting priorities nor the accuracy to disarm an opponent. Thus, launching a first strike with a second-strike capability would leave the adversary's arsenal intact and would be suicidal.

The most obvious application of a second-strike capability is in combination with a retaliatory strategy (cell 4). The strategy, in fact, is predicated on possessing the capability, since it makes little sense to absorb a preemptive strike if one could not preserve enough force with which to retaliate. In addition, the assurance that one can absorb a preemptive attack reduces incentives to "jump the gun" and launch a preemptive attack when an adversary's similar action may be mistakenly perceived to be imminent.

Cells 5 and 6 represent the situation for small nuclear powers whose capabilities are inadequate to constitute either a first- or second-strike force. For such countries, the characteristics of their smaller forces will dictate their strategic choices. If those forces are vulnerable to attack (meaning an adversary has an effective first-strike capability against those forces), the only sensible employment strategy is preemptive (cell 5). The situation is analogous to the weakling's dilemma before the body-building course; he fires first or not at all (use it or lose it). The prospect for deterrence in this strategy is that an opponent might deem the damage one could inflict as greater than any gain he could make (a lucky punch might knock out some of his teeth). If its forces

are invulnerable, a less-capable nation might adopt a retaliatory strategy (cell 6). Again in this case, the deterrent effect of the force is that its employment could cause great, if not fatal, damage. The effect in both cases is maximized by threatening to inflict as much damage as possible, thereby dictating a countervalue targeting priority.

At the military strategy level, the distinctions between declaratory strategy and development and deployment strategies that result in force capabilities are sometimes muddied because developmental strategies that could alter the relationship between two countries involve substantial lead times. In formulating declaratory strategy and providing guidance in development and deployment, a major task for planners is to emphasize developmental efforts that will result in desirable relationships between adversaries. In American circles at least, desirability has largely been equated with stability, and stability has been equated with reducing incentives to start nuclear war.

Nuclear Stability

As stated earlier, the primary purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter a potential adversary from using them. Since the ability to control a nuclear exchange is conjectural and the potential consequences of the inability to control such conflict are so awful, major emphasis has been placed on avoiding the onset of nuclear war (avoiding the so-called nuclear threshold or firebreak). As a consequence, anything that decreases the likelihood of nuclear war is said to be stabilizing and any- thing that increases the likelihood is destabilizing. Capability-strategy combinations can be viewed in that light.

In isolation and from the viewpoint of the possessor, a first-strike capability appears advantageous. The capability gives the holder great power over actual or potential adversaries, and, if properly deployed, it affords the luxury of adopting either a preemptive- or retaliatory-employment

strategy. True nuclear superiority is thus appealing on the surface.

Considered as part of the nuclear relationship between two states, however, introduction of one-sided first-strike capability is destabilizing. The key destabilizing element is that it can lead both states to adopt a preemptive strategy. For the powerful state, preemption has the advantage of disarming the opponent and hence engaging in true "damage limitation" (avoiding the destruction of absorbing an attack). The characteristics that make first-strike capability appealing to the possessor are extremely unappealing, and even unacceptable, to the state at which the capability is directed. That state is placed in a position of absolute nuclear inferiority and is left with constricted strategic options not unlike those confronting the 97-pound weakling. Thus, a nuclear attack against the powerful nation may be more, rather than less, likely than would be the case in the absence of its nuclear superiority. Preemption seems attractive to the side that knows that it must strike first, if it is to strike at all.

The result is an "itchy-finger" effect. If both sides are committed to preemption, they must anticipate the imminence of nuclear attack and calculate accordingly in any crisis. Crises by their nature are situations in which information is imperfect, and faulty interpretation and miscalculation can result in the decision to initiate a nuclear attack unnecessarily. The situation becomes even more unstable if both sides have first-strike capability (there is no 97-pound weakling) and both sides are committed to preemption.

A second-strike capability does not present the same difficulties if both states have enough confidence in their capability to adopt retaliatory strategies. When both parties in a nuclear relationship have second-strike capabilities and retaliatory strategies, the incentives to initiate a nuclear exchange are minimized and the system has maximum stability. The advantage of a retaliatory strategy in a crisis is

that it reduces the need to calculate an adversary's intentions of launching an attack. Since there is no need to anticipate *whether* such an attack is imminent but simply a need to respond after the attack occurs, there is no itchy finger to make a crisis situation even more tense. Furthermore, an adversary's knowledge that an attack ensures a devastating retaliation also dampens preemptive incentives.

For second-strike capability/retaliatory strategy to provide maximum stability, two conditions following from the definition of retaliatory forces must be met. First, a nation adopting a retaliatory strategy must be confident in the second-strike capability of its forces. Doubts about its ability to absorb an attack and retaliate effectively may result in a temptation to fire all or part of its force first, particularly the most vulnerable elements. In addition, the second-strike capability of retaliatory forces must be seen as credible by the potential adversary. If one's retaliatory strategy is to deter, the adversary must believe both in the survivability of the retaliatory force and in one's will to deliver the retaliatory blow.

Second, an adversary must believe that one's declared retaliatory strategy is implemented by a force suitable for that purpose and that one will in fact follow the strategy. As pointed out earlier, a second-strike capability can become or can appear to become a first-strike force (e.g., by gaining counterforce capability and warhead superiority). A force that is not unambiguously second strike in character can appear as a first-strike force to an adversary. In a crisis, uncertainty about the characteristics of, and intentions for, a force could lead to miscalculations and a decision to initiate nuclear hostilities .

Strategy Debate

Since the advent of the ICBM, either side can destroy the other by initiating a nuclear attack or by retaliating after the initial blow. Within this situation of mutual national

vulnerability, the nuclear peace has been maintained by the fears each superpower has of the other's weapons. Thus, deterrence has presumably rested on the notion that a potential aggressor realizes that his attack would trigger a deadly retaliation that would make the initial blow suicidal.

The nuclear strategy supporting and deriving from this formulation is known as assured destruction (AD) or mutual assured destruction (MAD) by its detractors, and it is a strategy that has always had opponents. Opposition has been based on several grounds.

One source of opposition has been the technological boundaries of the strategy. In the 1960s, when assured destruction was first formulated, missiles were highly inaccurate (meaning counterforce targeting against retaliatory forces was impossible and only countervalue targets could be reliably targeted) and no active defenses against nuclear attack existed. In that circumstance, societies were indeed vulnerable, and nothing could be done to reduce vulnerability.

That situation was bound to change, and it has changed to some extent. With great improvements in missile accuracy, it is now possible, at least theoretically, to contemplate a counterforce attack against such fixed-site, land-based retaliatory forces as ICBMs. At the same time, breakthroughs in missile defense such as those associated with the most ambitious forms of the SDI could radically reduce societal vulnerability as well. There are, however, very real practical sources of uncertainty about the degree to which such technological innovations would in fact reduce vulnerability in the event of nuclear conflict.

A second source of dissension is morality. Many argue that it is immoral to advocate a threat, as AD strategy does, that promises to kill a maximum number of presumably innocent noncombatants in retaliation for an attack against one's country. Moreover, the argument goes, such a counterattack would provide justification for a retaliation against the

retaliatory strike. Thus such a strategy seems incredible, since its implementation would have the ultimate effect of suicide.

From this objection comes a third and related objection that maintains that the condition of mutual societal vulnerability is simply unacceptable and irresponsible because it eschews any attempt to defend one's self in the event of nuclear war. The intentional maintenance of the condition of mutual vulnerability guarantees that, if deterrence fails, the result will be maximum carnage and suffering, some of which could be avoided if one adopts alternative strategies and makes different preparations.

This concern, and the basis of the strategy debate about nuclear weapons, is captured in something known as the *security dilemma.* The dilemma can be stated as: "the nuclear weapons that deter a nuclear attack against us could, if deterrence fails, destroy us." This statement contains two separate and not necessarily compatible ideas, which is why it is called a dilemma. On the one hand, there is the notion that nuclear weapons do in fact deter, which is good. Presumably, actions to reinforce whatever it is about such weapons that has deterrence effect should be a bedrock of strategy. On the other hand, the statement recognizes that deterrence can fail, and in a world of total societal vulnerability, the consequences could be catastrophic.

Which aspect of the security dilemma one chooses to emphasize has strong implications for the deterrence strategy that one prefers. If, for instance, one places primary emphasis on the deterring nature of nuclear weapons and assumes that the condition of societal vulnerability has contributed to that deterrence, one is led to the conclusion that deterrence is well served by the current balance. If one is primarily concerned about the possibility that deterrence might fail, one's emphasis is likely to be on ways to hedge against such an occurrence. SDI is a clear example of a hedge arising from such an emphasis. Helping to deepen the dilemma is the problem that emphasis on one aspect of the dilemma may come at the

expense of the other. If, to repeat the example, the nuclear balance of terror has contributed to deterrence by making both sides fearful of the consequences should deterrence fail, hedging against those consequences may weaken deterrence, thus making nuclear war more likely.

The only real purpose for this whole tangled debate, of course, is to produce a strategy to ensure national survival. The question then is what strategy most effectively achieves the policy goal? Essentially, there have been two answers to that question in the historical American debate about what threats best deter the Soviets. The roots of each answer can, in turn, be traced back to how adherents answer this question: Can nuclear war be limited? Before looking at the answers and how they translate into strategic preference, a word about the question itself is necessary.

The question is the second most basic question one can ask about nuclear dynamics (the most basic being how a nuclear war would start). The problem is that, in any reliable, scientific sense, no one has any earthly idea what the answer to either question is because there has never been a nuclear war. No one has had the "opportunity" to observe either how such a war begins or how it is conducted. Moreover, since the entire purpose of the enterprise is to avoid a nuclear war, we can only gain reliable knowledge by the massive failure of strategy and policy.

This diversion is necessary because it leavens the entire US strategy debate that begins with answering the question about whether nuclear war can be limited. The honest answer to the question, of course, is yes, no, or maybe; and we have no proof as to which is correct.

Those who believe nuclear war can be limited (or at least believe that limitation is more likely if we plan for it) favor a nuclear strategy that has been known variously as controlled response (during the Kennedy administration), limited nuclear options (the Nixon and Ford administrations), the countervailing strategy (the Carter administration), and most

recently, flexible response (the Reagan administration). Although somewhat different terms and levels of elaboration have accompanied different versions of the strategy, its core has remained constant.

The most basic presumption of those who believe in the ability to limit nuclear war is that a limited nuclear war is more likely than an all-out exchange. Thus, limited nuclear war is the real problem that must be addressed. Their reasoning is that since both sides know that the one kind of Soviet attack that would certainly trigger an all-out, assured destruction response is an all-out attack against American cities, that is the least likely form of Soviet attack. This means that all other, more limited attacks are more likely and are what must be deterred. Thus, US strategy should consist of a number of limited options that allow a proportional response to any Soviet aggression. If the American ability to respond in this manner is credible, the Soviets will realize that our counteractions would negate any gains they might hope to enjoy, and thus they will be deterred from making the attack (breaching deterrence) in the first place.

At the same time, proponents claim that emphasis on limited options has the advantage of at least attempting to ameliorate the effects of nuclear war (the second part of the security dilemma) by making the failure of deterrence less catastrophic. This orientation is thus compatible with such efforts as those associated with strategic defenses.

Not all the adherents of this position entirely believe that nuclear war can be limited. Rather, many make the more subtle point that, quite obviously, we cannot know in advance whether nuclear war can be limited, but the start of a nuclear war would be a terrible time to begin thinking about how to limit it. Under this line of reasoning, planning for less than all-out, catastrophic exchange is the only prudent and responsible mode of planning, even if one recognizes the possibility that limitation could prove impossible.

Further, those who support the basic limited options strategy are more prone than their opponents to raise questions about outcomes of nuclear exchange other than societal obliteration. Thus, official dialogue and even official policy discusses things such as "war termination on terms favorable to the United States" and "warfighting deterrence." The presumption, of course, is that such a posture and set of attendant preparations will have maximally deterring effect on the Soviets.

These kinds of formulations are absolute anathema to those who believe that a nuclear war cannot be limited. When one starts from a first assumption that a nuclear conflict would, through some sort of escalatory process, inevitably reach the level of general exchange, discussions about fighting and limiting such a war are, at best, banal brave talk and are, at worst, nuclear saber rattling that expands the occasions for and hence the likelihood of starting nuclear war.

The belief that nuclear war cannot be limited is most closely associated with the strategy of assured destruction (during the Johnson administration) and is implicitly associated with strategic sufficiency (during the first Nixon term). From their first assumption about the nature of nuclear war, proponents of these strategies conclude that deterrence is the overwhelming concern and that strategy must concentrate almost entirely on that goal (since by presumption other goals such as winning are impossible). As strategic guidance, anything that enhances deterrence (reduces the likelihood that anyone will initiate nuclear war) is good, and anything that weakens deterrence (increases the likelihood that someone will start a nuclear war, e.g., reduced fear of the consequences) is bad.

Assured destruction type strategies emphasize the first concern of the security dilemma and seek deterrence by making the consequences of the failure of deterrence as awful as possible. Operationally, they emphasize what Thomas C. Schelling called the "hostage effect." What this means is that

in a situation of mutual vulnerability in which both sides maintain secure retaliatory forces, each country in essence holds the other's population hostage. Even after absorbing an attack, each would have enough power to retaliate and destroy the other, hence executing the hostages. As long as this condition adheres, attempts at nuclear preemption would be suicidal and neither side has incentives to start a nuclear war.

The advocacy of a continuing condition of societal vulnerability and of a conscious threat to execute the hostages in the event of war places supporters of assured destruction in difficult positions. Since the deterrence threat requires penetrable retaliatory forces (forces capable of surviving a preemption and then capable of getting through defense to exact retribution), its advocates usually oppose emerging technologies. Highly accurate, counterforce capabilities are opposed because they threaten the survivability of retaliatory forces, and missile defenses of cities are opposed because they free the hostages. At the same time, advocates propose committing what amounts to genocide in retaliation for an attack. Moreover, since the adversary would maintain forces after an initial attack, the strategy is also suicidal (it would likely induce a retaliation against the retaliatory strike). On this basis, assured destruction is assailed as both immoral (targeting populations) and incredible (inviting suicide).

Although assured destruction as a conscious policy has not been official strategy for some time, there is a subtle variation of it that has survived its detractors. Few individuals any longer advocate assured destruction strategy. Instead, they point out that the outcome of a nuclear war, if it turns out to be nonlimitable, will indeed be destruction of both societies. It is this possibility, quite apart from any planning either side engages in, that makes deterrence the overwhelming priority.

Conclusion

Nuclear war remains a special case for the strategist. It is the only contingency for which strategy aims largely, if not wholly, at the avoidance of employing military forces in pursuit of national ends. It is also arguably the least likely form of warfare in which the United States might engage, but its potential is also the most consequential. Since national destruction remains a possible result of engaging in nuclear hostilities, the security dilemma is indeed a real factor that hangs like a Damoclean sword over this entire area of strategic concern.

SECTION IV

INFLUENCES ON THE PROCESS

CHAPTER 10

FOG, FRICTION, CHANCE, MONEY, POLITICS, AND GADGETS

The strategy process is, in its basic form, a straightforward and sequential decisionmaking exercise. The required decisions are difficult at best and present dilemmas at worst. To complicate the situation, every decision is influenced by a host of factors, most of which are far beyond the control of the strategist. The number of these factors is almost limitless, ranging from such obvious influences as geography to such more subtle influences as cultural heritage. In this chapter we briefly address several of the most important and ubiquitous influences: the "Clausewitzian trio" (fog, friction, and chance), economics, politics (domestic and international), and technology. In the next chapter we carry the examination of influences further by looking at one very special influence, military doctrine.

Clausewitzian Trio

The spiritual father of modern military thought in the Western world is Carl von Clausewitz. A veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, the Prussian intellectual characterized the essence of war as a situation clouded by fog, disrupted by friction, and often controlled by chance. Since the time when Clausewitz's major work was first posthumously published (1831), military establishments throughout the world have expended enormous efforts to clear away the fog of war, reduce the friction in war, and minimize the importance of chance on the outcome of conflict. Their efforts have met with only marginal success.

Fog of War

The fog of war is created by the perpetually incomplete and inaccurate information about the true state of affairs in war—what really is happening. Attainment of perfect information about the enemy has been, and continues to be, a near impossibility. Not only is information not always available (often due to actions of the enemy), but available information is likely to be inaccurate (again, often due to actions of the enemy). Disinformation is a "growth industry" in military affairs.

When accurate data are available, the data are subject to misinterpretation when processed into intelligence. Intelligence officers and commanders are often predisposed to believe the worst case indicated, or to take the opposite course and put the available information in the best possible light. Unwarranted pessimism or optimism can be equally disastrous. The former can waste valuable resources preparing for phantom threats. The latter can lead to inadequate pre parations for threats that are all too real.

Friction in War

Friction in war is closely associated, perhaps intertwined, with the idea of the fog of war. Most basically described, the concept of friction is akin to the twentieth-century notion of Murphy's Law; that is, whatever can go wrong will go wrong and at the worst possible moment. What goes awry is rarely a calamity in itself. Rather, small and sometimes insignificant events or incidents collectively drag down the overall level of performance, play havoc with timetables, and result in the failure to achieve intended objectives. Ultimately, such frictions can result in defeat. "For want of a nail a shoe was lost, for want of a shoe a horse was lost, etc." seems to be a fitting epigram for friction in war.

Clausewitz warned that in war even the most simple things are difficult to accomplish. Surely every reader of this volume has had the experience of dealing with large bureaucratic institutions and the attendant difficulties in getting even the most trifling matters properly addressed. In war the same sort of exasperating problems are compounded by fear, noise, the fog of war, and the actions of an enemy doing everything possible to increase the friction encountered.

Clausewitz also suggested that friction is what separates real war from war on paper. In the modern world, it is what separates well-scrubbed and elegant operational plans from the reality of the battlefield. It is what separates carefully calculated weapon system performance estimates based on sterile tests and mathematical extrapolations from actual performance under fire in the chaos of battle. Clausewitz went on to warn that one must "know friction in order to overcome it. . . and in order not to expect a standard of achievement in his operations which this very friction makes impossible.*

Chance in War

The third element of the Clausewitzian trio is chance—pure dumb luck. In the late twentieth century we sometimes lose sight of the fact that pure chance can play a major role in success or failure in war. The advent of sophisticated statistical analysis techniques, predictive computer-driven models, and the like cloud the fact that these tools and models may be based on erroneous data, inaccurate constructions, and questionable assumptions. It is quite a simple matter to be seduced by the pseudocertainties of probability theory.

*Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans., Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 120.

War is not an engineering project that can be reduced to precise calculations. The enemy is not an inanimate object but men and women capable of daring, boldness, and rashness. The environment itself is, of course, less than perfectly predictable. Clausewitz warned that "no other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance. And through the element of chance, guesswork and luck come to play a great part in war."*

Throughout American military history, chance has often played a significant role in spite of careful and often brilliant planning. Perhaps the most famous appearance of Dame Fortune was at the Battle of Midway in 1942. While still recovering from the disaster at Pearl Harbor, the US Navy read Japanese coded messages and realized that the enemy was about to launch an assault on Midway Island. American aircraft carriers were quickly positioned to ambush the Japanese fleet.

For their part, the Japanese had developed an elaborate operational plan (including a major diversionary action in the Aleutian Islands) and had assembled an overwhelming naval force to attack Midway Island and to destroy the remnants of the US Pacific Fleet. Even though the Americans knew the Japanese plans, on paper it appeared the Japanese had a crushing superiority. In spite of superior intelligence by the US Navy and detailed planning by the Japanese, the outcome of the battle rested on the incredibly good luck of US dive-bombers in the timing of their arrival over the Japanese fleet. First, the American bombers were fortunate just to find the enemy fleet. Second, they arrived just when many Japanese aircraft were refueling and rearming and the rest were out of position from having fought off an earlier torpedo-plane attack. Thus by pure happenstance, the

*Clausewitz, 85.

dive-bombers were virtually unopposed in their attack and the damage they inflicted was magnified by detonation of Japanese bombs and fuel on the decks of the carriers. Had the dive-bombers not found the Japanese fleet, or had they arrived perhaps ten minutes later, the entire course of the battle might have been reversed.

Strategy and the Clausewitzian Trio

The concepts of fog, friction, and chance are relatively clear. But what impact do they have on the strategist? The implications, it seems, are at least twofold – the first in terms of an admonition, the second in terms of an opportunity.

First, the principal message of fog, friction, and chance is that strategy (particularly at the operational level and below) must be flexible. Plans that rely on flawless execution are overly susceptible to failure. Plans that rely on rigid timetables and rigidly sequenced actions are overly susceptible to failure. In general, the more complex the plan, the more likely something will go awry. Further, although careful planning attempts to reduce the element of chance to a minimum, the strategist must remember that chance – dumb luck (or bad luck) – always remains a potent factor in success or failure.

The second message is that the more one can increase the fog and friction encountered by the enemy, the more likely it is that the enemy will be defeated. Flexible plans with alternative objectives, counterintelligence, disinformation, deception, concealment, and campaigns to disrupt enemy command and control capabilities can all increase the enemy's friction problems and play a major role in his defeat, sometimes long before any blood is shed. Such actions not only can lead to serious errors by the enemy on the battlefield but can also cause confusion and uncertainty that lower morale, sap aggressiveness, cause tentativeness, and undermine initiative.

Economic Influences on Strategy

Economic factors are perhaps the most obvious influences on the strategy process. We can view these influences from two perspectives. First, we examine the problems economic limitations present when making decisions within the process, particularly at the level of military strategy (economics and grand strategy were discussed in chapter 4). Second, we briefly examine the opportunities presented by economic influences at the level of operational strategy.

As military forces have grown in size and the implements of war have become more complex, a large economic and industrial base has become more and more important to modern military forces. Neither the village smithy nor cottage industries can produce the automatic weapons, artillery, tanks, ships, planes, munitions, and other equipment required for modern mechanized warfare. In short, the development and deployment (not to mention employment) of major military forces put a considerable strain on any nation's economic system. The economic strain is compounded by the rapid growth of government spending on nonmilitary services, particularly in the liberal democracies of the West.

As demands on government resources have grown, the military portion of the economic pie has, at least in the United States, shrunk relative to nonmilitary portions of the budget. This does not mean that military budgets have been reduced in absolute terms. In fact, US military budgets have grown rather consistently in absolute terms. The point here is that even though the American economy is much larger and more vigorous than it has been in times past, fewer of the government's economic resources are available for military purposes.

The situation is complicated by the cost of operating modern military establishments. This is particularly evident in the United States. Personnel costs soared following the demise of conscription. Weapon system costs skyrocketed as

systems became more sophisticated, leading to heated debates between those who favor the expanded capabilities of sophisticated but expensive weapons and those who favor larger numbers of less-expensive but less-capable weapons.

Modern warfare has also proved costly in battlefield expenditure of consumable stores and weapon systems themselves. Note, for example, that in the Southeast Asian limited war, the United States dropped more tons of bombs than were used in all of World War II. Other conflicts, most notably in the Middle East, have demonstrated unparalleled attrition in major weapon systems (especially armor), thanks to the lethality of modern "smart" weapons. As a result, there is a significant requirement to stockpile all of those things that we lump together as requirements for readiness (munitions, spares, etc.), and the stockpile requirement may be greater than previously imagined.

Unfortunately, with limited-budget monies available, dollars spent to stockpile readiness items can seriously cut into those funds available for development and purchase of new weapon systems and vice versa. Thus the strategist is faced with another risk-management problem, this time based on the harsh realities of economics. In the simplest terms, it is a question of balancing current readiness against future capability. The strategist can only strike the "correct" balance by assessing current versus future risk of war.

All of the foregoing factors influence military strategy decisions, that is, development, deployment, and broad plans for the employment of forces. However, these same factors may present opportunities at the operational level of strategy, opportunities to attack enemy "economic" targets that might have a quick and decisive effect on the battlefield. Much, of course, depends on the enemy, his economic vulnerabilities, and the nature of the war.

Although the crucial importance of economic factors has been reemphasized in the late twentieth century, it is certainly not a product of modern time. Nor is the idea of waging war

against an enemy's economy new. The time-honored concept of a naval blockade is an attack on an enemy's economic system that attempts to destroy commerce, cut off imported materials and products essential to warmaking capacity, and starve the populace into submission. Strategic bombing, which attempts to destroy the vital centers of enemy industrial production, is a newer version of economic warfare. In a sense, naval blockade and strategic bombing have the same purposes—bombing taking a more direct approach in the hope of achieving the purposes more rapidly.

Some forms of interdiction operations can also be considered economic warfare. Attacks on munitions stockpiles, transportation systems, and supplies en route to forces in the field are, in a sense, attacks on the enemy's economic system and its output. The success of these attacks depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the enemy's economic vulnerabilities and the effect of those vulnerabilities on combat capability within a useful time period.

In a broader sense, economic warfare can be waged during peacetime, perhaps reducing the possibility of a shooting war, perhaps deciding the outcomes of a shooting war before the shooting starts. Many observers would contend that the cold war struggle for influence and control that has raged between the United States and the Soviet Union is economic warfare waged for control of the world's natural resources and trading lanes. However, note that economic struggles can also precipitate shooting wars. At least part of the reason for the Japanese attack on American forces in 1941 was Japan's perceived need to extend its economic power throughout the Pacific basin.

Political Influences on Strategy

Politics, both domestic and international, are always potent influences on strategy decisions. War is a political act waged

to achieve political objectives. Political objectives may not coincide with military exigencies, a fact well illustrated in both Korea and Vietnam, much to the displeasure and consternation of military professionals. Both wars were limited conflicts waged for circumscribed political purposes and waged in the fear that "drastic" military action could escalate the conflicts to superpower nuclear confrontations. American military officers—reared, educated, and trained in an American tradition of total wars waged to destroy well-defined evils—found it difficult to adjust to "political" wars waged for limited purposes.

The experiences in Korea and Vietnam drive home the point that war is only part of a broader political intercourse and is controlled by political decisions. Moreover, in the Western democracies, wars are conducted in accordance with the perceptions and directions of civilian political leaders. This is true not only in limited wars but also in unlimited or total wars. In the American experience, military leaders have rarely, if ever, been given free rein by their political masters. In point of fact, civilian leaders have often imposed themselves on military affairs to an extent that military leaders found disturbing. President Polk's hands-on approach to the Mexican War was perhaps the most flagrant example and a precedent for the close control experienced by the military in the Vietnam War. In the Civil War, Lincoln played musical chairs with his generals and even in World War II, political decisions determined the course of events as the Allies chipped away at the Nazi empire.

On a less grandiose scale, decisions on weapon system procurement, force structure, and even force basing continue to be controlled as much by the whims of politicians facing reelection as on military practicality. If anything, the interest of political leaders in the details of military affairs has increased, particularly since the advent of nuclear weapons. The specter of nuclear holocaust has, right or wrong, made

political leaders more attuned to the notion that war is too important to be left to the generals.

Fear of a full-scale war has encouraged civilian leaders to take charge of military affairs. Moreover, the advent of near-instantaneous worldwide communications has allowed them to control events to a level of detail unheard of in the past. The ability of a president to talk to nearly anyone in the field—even to a soldier in a rice paddy ten thousand miles away—offers an almost irresistible temptation to control directly and to bypass normal command structures.

The result is a political leadership (executive and legislative) that has a direct impact at every level of strategy. Political and military objectives are set, force structures designed and procured, and troops sent into combat all under the close scrutiny and sometimes closer control of civilians. Perhaps worse for the strategist in terms of long-range plans, the cast in control shifts with the changes in political fortune of those in power. But whichever way the political winds are blowing, the strategist can be assured that politics will have a major impact on strategy decisions.

Impact of Technology on Strategy

For much of the past century, the US military has been in headlong pursuit of technological solutions to its warfighting problems. As the pace of scientific progress accelerated in the second half of the twentieth century, evermore sophisticated gadgetry and its presumed battlefield advantages became prime objects of American force development strategy. This effort to substitute American wizardry for American blood has met with enough success that, to a large degree, technological force multipliers are now the preferred currency of the American military realm.

There is no question that our pursuit of high-tech weapon systems has produced capabilities undreamed of only a few decades ago. But a note of caution is in order for the strategist.

Although modern technology is important to success on the battlefield, its value can be overstated, its risks understated, and its opportunity costs obscured or ignored.

If we examine the relationship of technology and warfare with a skeptic's calculating eye, we find several factors that should at least provide a cautionary note to our pursuit of high-tech solutions. First, possession of superior technology does not guarantee effective use of that technology. The history of modern warfare is replete with examples of squandered technological advantages. In World War II, for example, the Germans failed to capitalize on their advantages in jet and rocket technologies. Had the Germans concentrated their efforts on the production of jet-powered interceptors, the Allied strategic bombing offensive might have been in jeopardy. In the same light, had the Germans targeted the V-1 and V-2 weapons against embarkation ports in Great Britain, they might have seriously disrupted the logistical effort required to sustain the Allies on the Continent. Instead, the Germans concentrated on jet-powered attack bombers and rockets used as vengeance weapons against British cities. In a slightly different sense, the United States wasted its overwhelming technological superiority in both Korea and Vietnam. In both wars, military leaders found some of their most potent weapons could not be used for their intended purposes because of political considerations.

Second, given enough time and resources, technology can be equaled by the enemy. Technological advances are based on physical laws that are well known to our most dangerous opponents. In effect, there are no real technological secrets. Even if our opponents do not have the scientific, economic, and industrial infrastructures to produce equal technology, they can often obtain sophisticated weaponry from allies or supporters. The important point is that technological advantage is a relative thing. If an enemy develops or acquires

equivalent technology, the advantage disappears and force multipliers no longer multiply.

Third, technology can also be countered. It is particularly frustrating that some countermeasures are simple and inexpensive as well as effective. For example, chaff—simple strips of tinfoil—was first used to counter radar in World War II. It remains an effective counter. Technology can also be countered through the use of clever strategy and tactics. The United States went to war in Southeast Asia, relying on sophisticated weapons that could deliver large amounts of fire and steel on almost any target. The enemy countered by using guerrilla tactics that provided few lucrative targets.

Fourth, technology may not perform as well as expected. Fortunately, we have experienced combat infrequently. But this blessing often means that many of the high-tech gadgets on which we have come to depend are untested in the rigors of combat. In spite of our best efforts, neither simulations, exercises, nor maneuvers can replicate the chaos, complexity, and terror of the modern battlefield. We often find it difficult to anticipate the counteractions of a clever and dedicated enemy. The result is that we are frequently confronted in war by unexpected circumstances that seriously hinder the effective employment of our weapon systems, reducing or nullifying our technological advantage.

Fifth, technology may not produce a decisive advantage. Improvements in weapon systems, with a few notable exceptions, tend to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. In other words, technology tends to operate at the margins of military effectiveness. Technology provides soldiers in the field with better targeting systems, more accurate weapons, more powerful explosives, and so on, but these improvements may not produce a decisive advantage.

Sixth, technological sophistication produces unwanted baggage—undesirable side effects that offset, to some degree, the advantages produced by technology. This baggage must be evaluated by the strategist when examining the net worth

of a force multiplier. High cost is the most obvious undesirable effect, a factor that limits the number of weapons that can be procured. Moreover, these weapons are often so expensive they cannot be liberally expended in training. Some might argue that modern technology has made these weapons so simple and reliable that little training is needed. Those possessing the skepticism born in combat know better.

The message for the strategist in all of this is important and basic. Other things being equal, superior technology on the battlefield offers significant advantages. It is also demonstrably true that when other things are not equal (as is almost always the case), superior technology may play a significant role in reducing the odds on the battlefield. However, these truths must be tempered with the notion that militarily significant technological advantage is a fragile, perishable, and elusive commodity.

CHAPTER 11

MILITARY DOCTRINE

Influences on the strategy process are both numerous and important. Most are relatively well known and understood because they are similar to the influences that affect almost any political decision. This chapter, however, deals with an influence peculiar to national security strategy decisions—military doctrine. A detailed examination of doctrine is in order for at least two reasons. Doctrine has, or should have, an extraordinary impact on the strategy process, and doctrine is an ill-defined, poorly understood, and often confusing subject in spite of its considerable importance.

What Is Doctrine?

One can readily find a number of definitions for doctrine—some official, some unofficial—that often differ by country or military service of origin. Most fail to capture the significance of doctrine. Official definitions written in legalese even obscure doctrine's importance. Perhaps the best definition, one that is accurate, concise, and yet retains the vitality befitting doctrine's importance, is also one of the simplest. *Military doctrine is what we believe about the best way to conduct military affairs.* Even more briefly, doctrine is what we believe about the best way to do things.

Two words are particularly important in the definition. The use of the word *believe* suggests that doctrine is the result of an examination and interpretation of the available evidence. In addition, it implies that the interpretation is subject to change should new evidence be introduced. Doctrinal beliefs are not immutable physical laws but are interpretations of

changing evidence (e.g., new technology and new circumstances). The word *best* connotes a standard—a guide for those who conduct military affairs.

Sources

The principal source of doctrine is experience. In a sense, doctrine is a compilation of those things that have generally been successful in the past. The repeated success or failure of actions over time can be generalized into beliefs that, we hope, will be relevant to the present and the future. Unfortunately, not all past experience is relevant to the present (not to mention the future), and there is no guarantee that what is relevant today will remain relevant in the future. Thus, doctrine is a constantly maturing and evolving thing. Those "lessons" from the past that seem to have proved themselves over an extensive period of time, however, can be, and have been, not only generalized into doctrinal beliefs but have also been raised to higher levels of abstraction to become the so-called principles of war—doctrinal beliefs that are axiomatic.

Of course, doctrine is not just the result of experience. Experience by itself has limited utility. As Frederick the Great pointed out, if experiences were all-important, he had several pack mules who had seen enough of war to be field marshals. The real key is the accurate analysis and interpretation of history (experience)—and therein lies the rub. Each individual looks at history through different lenses, lenses shaped by a variety of factors, lenses that interpret history in very different ways. The results are differing views among nations and among military services within nations about the lessons of history and their applicability to the present and future. This problem is best illustrated by the disparate views concerning an enemy's center of gravity that were discussed in chapter 7.

Moreover, experience and the analysis of experience are not exclusive sources of doctrine because there are subjects for which there is no empirical evidence on which to base beliefs. This is particularly true of nuclear issues—how to deter nuclear war, how to wage nuclear war, and so on. Even though two nuclear weapons were used during World War II, by no stretch of the imagination could one consider that experience illustrative of what might transpire in a full-scale nuclear war. No one has any real experience to draw on, or any history of the best way to deter or conduct a nuclear conflict. For example, we assume that US nuclear retaliatory forces have deterred attack for four decades, but we have no solid evidence that this is the case.

In such evidential voids as that found in the nuclear arena, we are forced to rely on extrapolations of experience from other areas. We hope that such extrapolations are pertinent, but our standards for judgment can only be logic, intuition, and "gut feelings." This is, obviously, a risky but unavoidable situation. Even worse is the fact that in the nuclear realm we cannot afford to be wrong.

Development Problems

We have already alluded to several significant problems in the development of doctrine. The lack of concrete evidence in the nuclear area should be placed at the top of the problem list because of the consequences should we make an error. What nonnuclear evidence is pertinent to nuclear issues? Does any nonnuclear doctrine really apply to weapons of mass destruction? Does conventional logic apply when the consequences of nuclear war might include the death of civilization? Would anyone but a madman actually initiate a nuclear war? What would deter a madman? Can there be a winner (in some rational sense) in a full-scale nuclear war? These are all doctrinal questions of the utmost importance that frustrate nearly everyone who has to deal with them.

Problematic nuclear issues are not the only difficulties encountered in the area of doctrine. *Objective* analysis of experience can be especially difficult. This fact is best illustrated by the US experience in attempting to deal with the legacy of the Vietnam War. The passions of the Southeast Asian experience have died hard and have colored nearly every attempt to analyze the conflict. To some, the lesson of that war is a simplistic plea for "no more Vietnams," a rather ill-defined lesson at best. Others have attempted to identify scapegoats—finger pointing among some military professionals, civilian leaders, and antiwar activists—the lesson apparently being that if the scapegoats had been controlled or eliminated, everything would have worked out for the best. Still others have passionately criticized how the war was conducted and earnestly proposed fanciful remedies and reforms. In short, objective analysis has been in short supply. In such a situation, it is unlikely that sound doctrine will result. In the case of Vietnam, almost no doctrine has resulted.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous doctrinal problem is the tendency to let doctrine stagnate. Changing circumstances (for example, technological developments) must be constantly evaluated because they can modify beliefs about the important lessons of experience. If current and projected circumstances do not affect the analysis of history's lessons, doctrine rapidly becomes irrelevant. The French experience after World War I exemplifies the problem. Based on the demonstrated superiority of the defense when ensconced in strong trench works during the war, the French constructed the world's most elaborate and sophisticated fortifications along the Franco-German border. Unfortunately, the Maginot Line's static fortifications were irrelevant to the mobile warfare conducted by the Germans in World War II. The French analysis of history's lessons was not tempered by technological change, particularly the advent of motorized ground warfare supported by air power.

Finally, doctrine can become irrelevant if the assumptions that support it are not frequently reexamined for their continuing validity. The development of US air power doctrine provides a pertinent example. Based on the ideas of Gen William "Billy" Mitchell and further developed at the Air Corps Tactical School by Mitchell's protégés, the Army Air Forces went into World War II with a doctrine based on the belief that strategic bombing would (and should) be decisive in war. The World War II experience and the availability of nuclear weapons and long-range aircraft in the postwar era further ingrained this notion. Military budgets, force structures, equipment procurement, and training were all based on the central doctrinal belief in the deterrent and warfighting decisiveness of strategic bombardment. Even the tactical air forces became ministrategic forces in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The crisis came in 1965 when the United States entered the Vietnam War and the bombing of North Vietnam began. American air power doctrine was found to be bankrupt in Vietnam because its underlying assumptions were untrue in that situation. Strategic bombing doctrine assumed that all US wars would be unlimited wars fought to destroy the enemy and that America's enemies would be modern, industrialized states. Both assumptions were crucial to strategic bombing doctrine. They were reasonable and valid assumptions in the 1920s and 1930s, but invalid in the 1960s in the age of limited warfare in the third world. The results were frustration, ineffective bombing, wasted blood and treasure, and eventually the renaming of Saigon to Ho Chi Minh City.

Types of Doctrine

For many years there has been considerable confusion regarding the subject of doctrine. Some of this confusion has resulted from ill-considered doctrinal publications in the wake of the Vietnam War. In some cases these publications

reflected the confusion and consternation caused by the American failure in Southeast Asia, and they certainly reflected an inability to analyze the war dispassionately. Part of the confusion about doctrine also stems from the fact that there are three distinct types of doctrine. A brief survey of these types should help resolve some of the confusion.

Fundamental

Fundamental doctrine forms the foundation for all other types of doctrine. Its scope is broad and its concepts are abstract. Essentially, fundamental doctrine defines the nature of war, the purpose of military forces, the relationship of military force to other instruments of power, and similar subject matter on which less abstract beliefs are founded. The following examples are typical statements of fundamental doctrine:

> "War is policy carried on by other means."
>
> "War is the failure of policy."
>
> "The object of war is to overcome an enemy's hostile will."
>
> "The object of war is a better state of peace."

An examination of these statements reveals two significant characteristics of fundamental doctrine. The first is the almost timeless nature of fundamental doctrine. It seldom changes because it deals with basic concepts rather than contemporary techniques. The second characteristic, which is really the basis of the first, is that fundamental doctrine is relatively insensitive to political philosophy or technological change. The statements, if accepted, seem applicable in democratic or authoritarian states and cogent whether discussing Napoleon's campaigns or recent conflicts.

Environmental

As technological innovations allowed man to put to sea and take to the air, man's proclivity for war quickly followed. Quite naturally, beliefs also developed about how best to use sea power and air power. Thus, environmental doctrine (the rubric for sea power, air power, land power, and space power doctrine) is a compilation of beliefs about the employment of military forces within a particular operating medium.

Environmental doctrine has several distinctive characteristics. It is narrower in scope than fundamental doctrine because it deals with the exercise of military power in a particular medium. Environmental doctrine is significantly influenced by such factors as geography and technology. Sea power doctrine, for example, is obviously influenced by geography (there are many places one cannot take a naval vessel) and by technology, particularly since the advent of naval aviation and submarine warfare. Air power doctrine, on the other hand, is less influenced by geography but depends totally on technology for its very existence.

Organizational

Organizational doctrine is best defined as basic beliefs about the operation of a particular military organization or group of closely linked military organizations. It attempts to bring the abstractions of fundamental and environmental doctrine into sharper (yet still somewhat abstract) focus by leavening them with current political realities, capabilities, and cultural values. Typically, organizational doctrine discusses roles and missions of an organization, current objectives, administrative organization, force employment principles as they are influenced by the current situation, and, in some cases, tactics.

Organizational doctrine has several salient characteristics that distinguish it from fundamental or environmental

doctrine. Organizational doctrine is *very* narrow in scope. Organizational doctrine concerns the use of a particular force (e.g., US or Soviet) in a particular environment (e.g., US Air Force or Soviet Air Force) at a particular time—today. In addition, organizational doctrine is current and must change to stay current. This tendency to change contrasts sharply with the almost timeless qualities of fundamental doctrine and the considerable staying power of environmental doctrine.

In the United States, organizational doctrine comprises the bulk of doctrinal publications. It has been further subdivided and specialized into doctrine for specific types of forces, types of conflicts, and other subcategories. As the content of these publications increasingly narrows in scope, it assumes the characteristics of regulations or standard operating procedures. The distinction between beliefs about how to do things at this level of detail and directives on the same subject is a matter of conjecture.

Interrelationships

How do these complex puzzle pieces fit together? Clearly, fundamental doctrine is the basis for all other types of doctrine, and environmental doctrine is at least part of the basis for organizational doctrine. One way to understand these relationships is to visualize them as parts of a tree (fig. 4). The trunk of the tree is fundamental doctrine and, of course, has its roots in history—the primary source of doctrine. The tree branches represent environmental doctrine—each springing from the same trunk, each individual, and yet all related. The leaves represent organizational doctrine—dependent on both the trunk and the branches and changing from season to season.

The analogy of the tree can be carried even further. For example, what would happen if the lessons of history cannot be accurately interpreted? The results would be analogous to cutting the roots and therefore killing the tree (i.e., defeat).

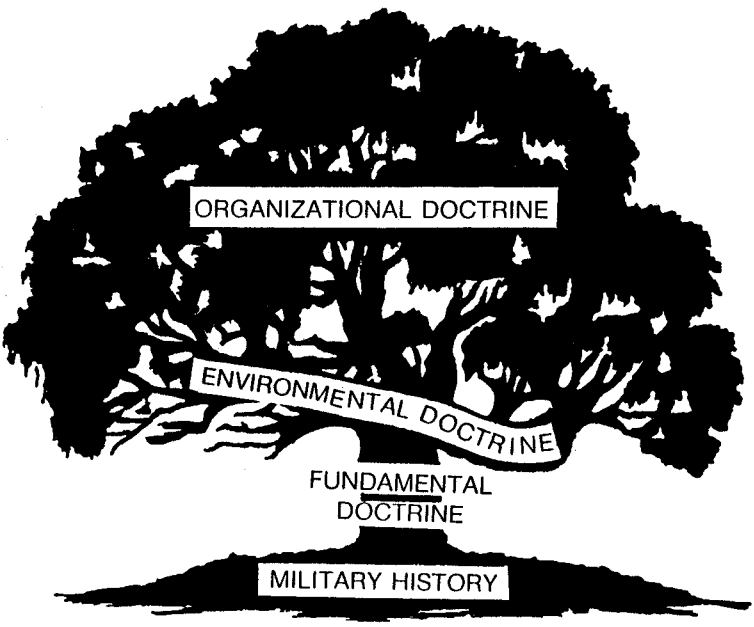

Figure 4. Doctrine Tree.

What would happen if there was no valid fundamental or environmental doctrine? This is analogous to a diseased trunk or branch that could kill the tree, including the leaves (again, defeat). The analogy of the doctrine tree illustrates that doctrine must be a coherent whole to be valuable, shows the dependencies involved, and emphasizes the often ignored importance of fundamental and environmental doctrine.

Relationship of Doctrine and Strategy

Doctrine has many functions. Its first function is to provide a tempered analysis of experience and a determination of beliefs. Its second function is to teach those beliefs to each succeeding generation. Its third function is to provide a common basis of knowledge and understanding that can provide guidance for actions. All three of these functions

come to fruition in doctrine's relationship to strategy decisions.

Doctrine provides, in essence, a knowledge base for making strategy decisions. Doctrine is always somewhat abstract and thus provides the foundation from which to begin thinking when facing a concrete and specific decision. Without doctrine, strategists would have to make decisions without points of reference or guidance. They would continually be faced with the prospect of "reinventing the wheel" and repeating past mistakes. Superior doctrine should be the storehouse of analyzed experience and military wisdom and should be the strategist's fundamental guide in decisionmaking. The importance of this function was succinctly put by T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) when he commented that with 2,000 years of examples there is no excuse for not fighting a war well.*

As important as doctrine should be at nearly every level of strategy, it often does not control strategy or even have a significant influence on strategy decisions, a source of great frustration for the military professional. This tendency has been most notable since World War II as traditional military doctrine has often clashed with political decisions in conducting limited warfare. In both Korea and Vietnam, military leaders chafed under the close control of civilians whose decisions about the conduct of the wars often ran counter to military advice. Many military leaders contend such decisions played a major role in preventing a clear-cut victory in Korea and in causing a clear-cut failure in Vietnam. Civilian leaders, on the other hand, contend that traditional military doctrine is incompatible with limited warfare. They believe that either or both of those wars could have escalated to a superpower confrontation if the military had been allowed to implement its doctrine.

*Quoted in J. A. English, "Kindergarten Soldier: The Military Thought of Lawrence of Arabia," *Military Affairs*, January 1987, 10.

The frustrations of Korea and Vietnam highlight the fact that military doctrine is only one of a host of factors influencing strategy decisions. The influence of doctrine is inversely proportional to the importance attached to other factors. In Korea and Vietnam, the threats of escalation and confrontation were of overwhelming importance and negated the influence of military doctrine. These same kinds of phenomena can also occur in peacetime. Military advice and requests concerning force structures, weapon system procurement, and force deployment (all of which are—or should be—based on military doctrine) are often ignored, overruled, or modified because of economic and political factors that assume overwhelming importance. In both peace and war, the influence of military doctrine can be negated, modified, or limited by any of the host of other factors that influence strategy decisions. The degree to which doctrine influences strategy depends on the relative importance of doctrine in the eyes of the decisionmaker.

Thus in an imperfect world, doctrine is not always accorded its proper influence, which suggests yet another important function of doctrine. As the best way to conduct military affairs, doctrine provides a standard against which to measure our efforts. Many factors prevent the military from doing things in the best manner, but doctrine can still provide a yardstick—an indicator of success and a tool for analyzing both success and failure. Doctrine can measure not only its own impact on the decisionmaking process but also its own relevance. If military doctrine were followed to a substantial degree and success were not achieved, this would indicate that changes to doctrine were in order; that is, experience of failure would feed the development of new doctrine. If, under the influence of doctrine, the strategy decisions led to success, the experience of success would also add to the experience that feeds the development of doctrine. This brings the strategy and doctrine relationship full circle. Doctrine

influences strategy (or it should) and the results of strategy become the experiences that are the basis for doctrine.

SECTION V

THE CONTINUING DILEMMAS

CHAPTER 12

CONVENTIONAL WAR DILEMMAS

In previous chapters, we have described the decision process involved in making strategy, how the decisions are related one to another, and the numerous influences that twist, constrain, and alter an otherwise straightforward process. We have also devoted considerable attention to two special cases in which the problems for the strategists assume unusual dimensions—insurgent warfare and nuclear deterrence. In this and the two chapters that follow, we examine several continuing dilemmas facing the strategist in the conventional, insurgent, and nuclear arenas. We have alluded to many of these dilemmas in previous chapters, and thus the discussion in this section serves as a summary from the perspective of the strategy decision process and the nature of the potential conflict.

Even though most Western military establishments (particularly in the United States) have devoted the bulk of their study, planning, and development efforts toward conventional warfare, that is, mechanized warfare on the European model, they still face conventional problems that seem to defy solution. The problems are found at nearly every level of the strategy process. Although the problems are numerous, we will concentrate on only a few of the most prominent and troublesome—those that qualify as true dilemmas.

How Much Effort?

A conventional war against the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies is a very important part of the worst-case

scenario pursued by American and other Western military strategists. A serious land war in Northeast Asia (specifically, Korea) is another case almost as unpleasant and important in American planning. A major portion of US military strategy and operational strategy has been built around these two worst cases. The bulk of the equipment developed and procured, of the training supplied, and of the deployment of US forces is based on the perceived need for deterring these conflicts and, if the worst cases come to pass, for having a reasonable expectation of winning.

The question remains, however, as to the proper amount of effort to devote to these conventional cases. Most experts agree that a major war in Europe is an unlikely prospect and that other forms of warfare in remote parts of the world against very different enemies are far more likely to attract US attention and involvement. On the other hand, nearly everyone agrees that the reason a European conflict is unlikely is that the United States and its NATO partners have expended so much treasure and effort to prepare for such a war.

Critics of the American concentration on the European worst case claim that while preparing for the big war that will never come, the United States is suffering slow defeat from a thousand cuts administered in small conflicts in vital third world areas. While US attention is riveted on Europe, the correlation of forces is gradually shifting in other areas. Supporters of the worst-case policy claim that the United States has little choice. If the NATO guard falls in Europe, the worst case might well become the most likely case and a geopolitical catastrophe could quickly result. Some traditionalists go so far as to claim that being prepared for a major war in Europe means that the United States is prepared for any less-demanding and less-intense contingency elsewhere.

The situation in Northeast Asia is a bit more unsettled. Deterrent efforts have been successful, but the adversary in

that region (North Korea) seems intent on its quest to unify the peninsula and may be easily tempted to initiate open hostilities. Much depends on the influence and control exercised by North Korea's larger neighbors and primary military suppliers, China and the Soviet Union.

The question of how much effort should be devoted to preparing for and thus deterring a major conventional war remains problematic. As military budgets become more constrained, policy battle lines are sharpened. Those who concentrate on the worst-case scenarios believe every dollar diverted to nuclear or insurgent warfare preparations makes the conventional worst case more likely. Those who favor more balanced preparations across the spectrum of conflict do not believe such decisions greatly increase the risk of conventional war and tout the requirement to defend US interests around the world at every level of conflict.

The dilemma reduces itself to a risk-management problem. What are the affordable risks? Can the United States be prepared to fight at every level of conflict everywhere—and what risks does that pose to the economy of the nation? Can the United States risk not being prepared to fight somewhere or in some manner—and where are those places and what are those ways of fighting? The way we answer these questions is conditioned by our national objectives, and, in turn, affects our force structuring and operational capabilities. This dilemma affects every level of the strategy process.

Getting There versus Being There

As noted earlier in the volume, it is difficult to imagine a major conventional war that is not an expeditionary war for the United States. Our deployment choices reduce themselves to having forces on the scene ready to do battle or getting forces to the battle area in time to achieve victory. The dilemma is that neither course of action is an ideal solution.

Having forces on the scene – ready to do battle and familiar with the terrain, the enemy, and any allies – is clearly the desirable situation, providing one knows where the fighting will take place. Unfortunately, such perfect knowledge is rarely available in an imperfect world. Worse, if one believes in the notion of deterrence, wherever ready forces are stationed becomes the least likely place for an enemy to strike. Further, forward-deployed forces are more susceptible to destruction by unexpected enemy actions. Such forces are also costly to maintain.

On the other side of the coin, an attempt to deploy forces from scratch after the start of major hostilities is a chancy and difficult practice for several reasons. First, it requires a large amount of fast lift capability (sea and air) plus facilities to disembark forces. Security of the forces being lifted also poses significant problems, particularly if the enemy is able to attack sea and air lines of communication or disembarkation points. The most important problem, however, is time. Unless the deployment is very rapid, the issue could be decided before deploying forces arrive. Further, rapid lift requires forces and equipment designed for such eventualities, designs that may not be compatible with the kinds of forces required to defeat the enemy in question.

The US solution has been to avoid the extremes and seize the middle ground. Some forces are kept deployed forward in the most vital areas but probably not enough to defeat a major enemy onslaught. The United States assumes it will have enough strategic warning in time of crisis to augment deployed forces with formations transferred from the United States. Depending on one's point of view, this compromise solution is either the best or worst of all possible solutions. On one hand, it provides a formidable presence to reinforce deterrence and provides forces on the scene able to fight immediately. On the other hand, it probably does not provide enough immediate force, requires the maintenance of

overseas forces *and* significant lift capability, and continues a major drain on the treasury.

The American compromise solution attempts to minimize risks, but significant risks are still present. As noted, the compromise's success hinges on adequate and accurate strategic warning. Thus the real risk is a bolt-out-of-the-blue attack that denies adequate time for reinforcement of forces on the scene. Those who favor the compromise solution maintain that complete strategic surprise is politically unlikely and operationally almost impossible. Those who oppose the compromise remember past surprises, particularly Pearl Harbor.

Quality versus Quantity

Although the situation could change in the distant future, the most likely and powerful opponent for the United States in a full-scale conventional war is the Soviet Union. The Soviets have significant advantages in numbers—troops and equipment—with which to fight. American strategy has been to offset the Soviet advantage in quantity with superior quality. This idea is a natural extension of the basic US philosophy of substituting fire and steel for American blood.

Critics claim that superior quality has its own drawbacks and that we have no real notion of how much quantity quality can offset. They further claim that the excessive (in their view) cost of sophisticated weapons so limits their procurement that the ability to fight is seriously limited and that military flexibility is impaired. They worry that relying on relatively few and expensive weapon systems can lead to an overly cautious policy for fear of putting those systems at serious risk. They argue that the United States has unwittingly placed itself in a position similar to that of eighteenth-century monarchs who hesitated to risk their small and expensive forces in battle.

Proponents of high technology argue that the capabilities of modern, sophisticated weapon systems so outstrip their low-technology rivals that there is no comparison in capability. Further, they point out that high-technology weapons have been in the forefront of US military strategy for many decades, and Americans have shown little reluctance in using them. If anything, the Soviets have been the ones reluctant to use their forces. They have often relied on surrogates and may have done so precisely because of US technological superiority.

There are kernels of truth in both positions. Surely, there must be some point at which quantity overcomes quality. It is also demonstrably true that superior quality—technological superiority—can be an enormous advantage on the battlefield. The risks at either extreme are obvious, and the optimum solution for the strategist may be a compromise. However, it is also possible that the real solution may be the worst-possible prospect; that is, the need for a legion of very sophisticated weapon systems. Or it may be that the solution lies in an altogether different approach. Perhaps the solution lies in the people who operate weapon systems (superior training), or in the ways those weapon systems are used (superior operational and tactical strategy).

The quality versus quantity dilemma is also intertwined with the problem of expanding national security commitments. American commitments are worldwide and our *potential* adversaries are manifold. Since a particular weapon system can only be one place at a time, the quantity issue is again important, particularly if multiple contingencies are probable. However, just because the United States might face a much smaller power than the Soviets does not mean that sophisticated weapons will not be required. Many of the poorest of third world nations have been supplied with sophisticated military hardware by the major powers, and many of their forces have had first-class training from the same sources. Thus the dilemma continues. The United States

must have enough weapons to meet worldwide commitments, but those weapons must be good enough to defeat sophisticated forces even in the most remote areas.

Expansion and Escalation

Some military strategists have postulated that a major war in Europe would require the United States to expand the war to other theaters to take advantage of Soviet vulnerabilities and to relieve pressure in Europe. In particular, they have suggested attacks on the eastern Soviet Union, perhaps naval attacks on the Soviet Pacific provinces. These strategists have also suggested attacks on Soviet allies around the world, most notably, Cuba.

Such horizontal escalation certainly seems to have considerable virtue, but whether such attacks could effectively divert Soviet attention and forces and thus lessen pressure in Europe is a matter of conjecture. The exchange of Western Europe for Cuba seems a poor bargain. In the Pacific, there is some question as to whether the Soviets fear attacks the United States might be able to muster or whether their real fear is of China.

Horizontal escalation would probably increase the danger of vertical escalation toward the use of nuclear weapons and therein lies another dilemma. Many strategists—including some senior military commanders—have stated that in a full-scale, Soviet conventional attack on Western Europe, NATO forces would be forced to use nuclear weapons or would face rapid defeat. Use of those weapons would bring everyone into unknown and dangerous territory. Would the Soviets respond with nuclear weapons? If so, what would be the outcome in terms of the struggle for Western Europe? Would nuclear targets be limited to the battlefield, or would the weapons be used far beyond the battlefield? Would the of theater nuclear weapons escalate to homeland-to-homeland exchanges and to a full-scale nuclear war?

We could also turn this question around and ask: If we are successful in blunting a Warsaw Pact drive into Western Europe, might the Soviets and their allies be tempted to use nuclear weapons? What might the NATO response be and to what purpose? The risks in either situation are high, primarily because the use of nuclear weapons takes everyone into uncharted waters. The situation is particularly dangerous if either side faces a desperate situation and imminent defeat.

Precisely because of the risks of escalation to nuclear confrontation, many experts believe that a major conventional war in Europe is unlikely. But this brings us back to the first dilemma discussed in this chapter. Such a war may be unlikely precisely because of the preparations made to deter and fight such a conflict, including the use of nuclear weapons. Thus, we are faced with the paradoxical situation of being prepared to wage the war that no one can afford to fight. We address nuclear dilemmas more specifically in chapter 14. Suffice it to say at this point that even in the area of conventional warfare, the strategist is faced with difficult, confusing, and risk-laden dilemmas.

CHAPTER 13

INSURGENT WARFARE DILEMMAS

Almost without question, this chapter is incomplete and will remain so through many future revisions of this volume. Its unfinished nature is a direct result of the meager attention devoted to the subjects of insurgency and counterinsurgency by US governmental organizations, particularly the military. The resurgence of interest and study in these areas during the mid-1980s has yet to produce the definitive analysis required to complete this chapter. Thus for the present and foreseeable future, the identification of dilemmas and problems and their scant discussion in this chapter will have to suffice. Nevertheless, the reader will note that the problems discussed, although limited, present the strategist a full plate of worries.

How Much Effort?

The first dilemma facing the strategist in the area of insurgent warfare is the mirror image of the same problem discussed in the previous chapter. Following the end of our involvement in the Vietnam War, American attention turned almost exclusively toward more traditional (and in some ways more comfortable) national security concerns—large-scale conventional warfare and nuclear deterrence, the so-called worst cases. Interest in the subject of insurgent warfare did not revive until rebel movements in Central America began making headlines in the early 1980s, and the interest generated was often of a negative nature. The plea for "no

more Vietnams" still carried a persuasive emotional message more than a decade after US involvement in Southeast Asia ended.

In spite of the emotionalism attached to the Vietnam experience and by extension to roughly similar situations elsewhere, many analysts believe that third world insurgencies are the most likely kinds of future conflicts and are also most likely to draw American attention and some level of participation. They also believe the worst-case possibilities of direct nuclear or conventional confrontation with the Soviets have become the least likely possibilities, primarily because of American preparations and efforts to deter these possibilities.

Thus, the dilemma for the American military concerns how to balance the weight of effort devoted to the worst cases and the most likely cases. Even a cursory examination of the American military reveals that precious little effort and attention have been devoted to the problems of insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare. Those who believe that insurgent wars are the most likely kinds of conflict rue this situation and worry that while the United States prepares for a climactic clash with the Soviet Union, it will suffer a "death of a thousand cuts" in third world upheavals. Conversely, those who focus on the worst cases fear that any resources diverted from those dour subjects will increase the danger of a catastrophe. The dilemma can be codified in this question: How much effort can be diverted from the worst cases to the most likely cases before the worst cases become significantly more likely?

The strategist's problem is made more difficult by two important factors. First, because of the lack of objective analyses in the area of insurgent warfare, many military leaders believe that insurgencies are little more than conventional wars writ small. They adhere to the notion that if one is capable of fighting and winning in the worst-case conventional wars, one is capable of fighting and defeating an insurgency. One of

the authors of this volume was told by a very senior military officer in 1985 that the US military could "just muddle through those small insurgencies and still win."

The second factor affecting the strategist is that in the constant battle for budget dollars, those concerned with countering insurgent movements are at a distinct disadvantage within the military establishment. Much of the hardware most appropriate for use in insurgent wars is simple, relatively inexpensive, and, in many cases, has only minimal utility in major conventional wars. Thus, competing for budget monies against procurement programs based on worst-case analyses is especially difficult.

The dilemma of how much effort is enough – balancing the risks of the worst case against the most likely case – remains unresolved. From the perspective of the most likely-case advocate, this is especially frustrating because most of the other dilemmas of insurgent warfare strategy flow from the "how-much-is-enough" problem. We now turn to the problems of deterring such conflicts (if that is possible) and assisting allies in combating insurgents. We then consider some of the dilemmas that arise should American combat participation eventuate.

Deterring and Assisting

The discussion in chapter 8 indicated that attempting to deter insurgent warfare through military strength is probably a less than fruitful strategy decision. Generally, insurgents use guerrilla tactics because they are already outmanned and outgunned. An increase of governmental military power, by itself, would appear to have minimal effects in terms of deterring insurgent activity. This situation does not necessarily doom the government in power to the task of combating insurgent warfare. It may be possible to deter insurgents

through more broadly based actions. However, effective actions may be exceedingly difficult for the government to implement.

Given the dangers and privations facing insurgents and their supporters, active and growing insurgencies must be based on deep-seated and important dissatisfactions among the people concerning government policies. Most commonly, the grievances concern political control (which is often concentrated in a small elite group) and economic opportunity (particularly ownership of land in agrarian third world nations).

In most cases rather simple reforms in political and economic policies apparently could defuse insurgent movements, even if there are professional revolutionaries among the rebels. However, the elite who benefit from repressive political and economic policies are the individuals who support and dominate the government in power. In short, what would seem to be obviously needed reforms are usually viewed as threats to the government and its supporters and are therefore difficult to implement. It is indeed possible that in the process of making needed reforms, the government could lose the support of the elites before winning the support of the bulk of the population. If this took place, a very dangerous period of unknown length would exist during which the government would have almost no support, save the support of an outside power (e.g., the United States). Such a situation puts the strategist in a delicate position, requiring great finesse and perhaps a large portion of good fortune.

Although a military buildup may have limited utility in deterring an insurgency, American military assistance (short of combat forces) may be absolutely vital in combating an insurgency. Although this assistance may be crucial, it may also be difficult to provide because of the relatively indifferent official attitude of the US government toward such struggles in the past. The kinds of equipment and training the United States can most readily supply may not be what is needed to

counter an insurgency. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, for example, the United States provided technical advisers, training, and equipment to the South Vietnamese. The result was a South Vietnamese military establishment based on the American model, ready to repel an overt conventional invasion from North Vietnam. Unfortunately, an insurgency was brewing immediately underfoot and, as time revealed, the South Vietnamese were ill-prepared to counter the rebels.

Role of an Intervenor

Insurgencies are, almost by definition, civil wars. The situation is greatly complicated when intervenors enter the struggle as happened in Vietnam. In that war, the situation became even more muddied because one intervenor, North Vietnam, considered itself not an outside power but rather the dominant internal element in the struggle for political control of the greater Vietnamese nation. Regardless of how one views the actual role of the North Vietnamese, the United States was clearly an outside intervenor (right or wrong—we are not passing judgment) and might well intervene again in another third world insurgency. The question then becomes: What is the most effective role for an intervenor in a civil war?

In Vietnam, the United States was criticized for taking over the actual fighting of the war, particularly during the critical years from 1965 to 1968. Only after the United States had decided to get out of the war did the so-called Vietnamization process begin. By taking on the bulk of the hard fighting, the United States put its military reputation at risk in a war it was not well prepared to prosecute. American dominance on the battlefield added fuel to the enemy's propaganda fires that claimed the United States was just another colonial master replacing the previously defeated French and that the South Vietnamese government was nothing more than a puppet for the United States.

American commanders claimed that the United States had little choice but to assume the bulk of the military load. By the time American combat troops arrived, the South Vietnamese army was a shambles—poorly led, poorly trained, racked by desertions, and generally unable to face the enemy in the field. (We should remember, at this point, who trained and equipped the South Vietnamese army.) The resulting role for the South Vietnamese largely, but not exclusively, consisted of following the Americans and taking charge of security and pacification efforts.

Thus the strategist may be faced with a true dilemma. The intervening force may be the only force available that can prosecute the military side of the war (why else directly intervene?) but outsider intervention may sow the seeds of its own ultimate failure. The answer may lie in more effective assistance before intervention (which might eliminate the need to intervene) or combat intervention long before a military crisis has been reached. One wonders, however, if combat intervention would be supported by the American public if a clear-cut crisis were not imminent.

Waging a Counterinsurgent War

Ignoring for a moment the best role for an intervenor, waging a counterinsurgent struggle remains a problem-laden proposition. The strategist faces serious problems and dilemmas in at least three important areas.

The first dilemma has to do with finding an effective method to attack the enemy's center of gravity. As noted in chapter 8, both the government and the insurgents have essentially the same center of gravity—the people. Neither side can long survive without the people's support or at least their neutrality. This calls into serious question the military concept of attacking the enemy's center of gravity with fire and steel, for to do so might (probably would) also destroy the government's

support. This is, of course, one reason that some insurgent actions are aimed at eliciting draconian reprisals, which may do the government much more harm than good.

The answer to the problem may lie in population control, security, and a superior intelligence apparatus to find and isolate insurgent cells. What role intervening forces might play in the answer is questionable. One would assume that in the intelligence function, indigenous forces would be far better suited and more effective than foreigners who are relatively unfamiliar with the culture. Indigenous troops might also be better suited for population control and security. This may mean that the bulk of the hard fighting against enemy field forces in the purely military portion of the war would again be left to an intervenor's forces, and we have seen that this is an unfavorable situation.

A system for eliminating insurgent cells within the populace probably would not be enough to stamp out an insurgent movement if it were not accompanied by political and economic reforms. The basis for the insurgency would remain intact and the insurgent movement might spread faster than insurgent cells could be neutralized. Thus, there is a requirement to carefully orchestrate military field operations, security and intelligence efforts, and political/economic aid and reform efforts. This leads to the second major dilemma in waging a counterinsurgent war, orchestrating the instruments of power.

The key question in the orchestration process has to do with command and control of the total effort. Which portion of the overall effort has primacy? If it is the fighting in the field, the military might hold sway in the command system. If security and internal intelligence are deemed the keys to success, perhaps the target government's police agencies should have the upper hand. If political and economic policies are most important in the struggle, then perhaps politicians should lead the effort. In Vietnam, although close political control of the American effort was exercised from the United States, the

military was clearly in command of the situation, from both the American and South Vietnamese standpoints. Further, whenever the United States intervenes, American largess may overwhelm the targeted government and thus create a case for American control even as an outside power. An efficient and effective command and control system to orchestrate a complex counterinsurgency strategy is a difficult thing to produce, particularly if an intervening power such as the United States is involved.

The command and control problem is further complicated by the fact that the United States and the supported government may have divergent objectives. Because insurgencies are essentially civil wars in which compromise solutions are rarely possible, the objectives of the principal antagonists tend to be unlimited. Each usually strives for the absolute destruction of the other. Offers of conciliation are viewed as signs of weakness that should be exploited. The objectives of the United States, however, could be much more moderate, perhaps seeking a compromise settlement. The strategist faces the problem of trying to mesh what may be diverging objectives and doing so in a complex and fragile command structure that may be badly fragmented. The prospect is not appealing.

This brings us to the third major problem facing the strategist in actually waging a counterinsurgent war. Insurgencies are protracted wars; insurgents use time as an ally as they attempt to wear down the government. This presents a particularly difficult problem for the United States should American forces become involved. Americans are impatient by their very nature. This is a blessing when attempting to solve many problems, but a curse to the strategist attempting to wage a counterinsurgency. Americans demand progress, clear-cut progress, if they are to continue using their blood and treasure to fight in a foreign land. Unfortunately, counterinsurgencies are lengthy and are not prone to display clear progress. They do not lend themselves to front-page maps showing arrows

representing victorious American troops advancing into the heart of the enemy's stronghold. Insurgents have few strongholds (except for the determination of the people who support the insurgency) because they usually do not attempt to seize and hold territory. Thus battles may be fought year after year in the same general areas as opposing forces flow back and forth through the countryside.

The nature of insurgencies and the impatient nature of Americans offer the insurgent built-in leverage. If the insurgent can survive, can live to fight another day, can avoid decisive defeat, and can drag out the conflict, it is very possible that the Americans will tire of the whole affair and "go home." This is essentially what happened in Vietnam. (It is also what happened to the French in Vietnam in 1954.)

The limits of American patience (especially in the absence of clearly perceived progress) are unknown and may well depend on how closely connected the American people believe the struggle is to US vital interests. In Vietnam the turning point seemed to be the shock of the Tet offensive in January 1968, which came after about three years of large-scale American combat. In other situations the limit of American patience may be reached much sooner or later. This uncertainty puts a tremendous strain on strategists who must deal with all of the problems and uncertainties of a coalition counterinsurgent war with no real idea about the time constraints within which they must operate. Clearly, this is a vexing problem.

The discussion in this chapter only scratches the surface of the subject, and the dilemmas discussed require further study if they are to be resolved. Until much greater effort is placed on studying the most likely scenarios rather than the worst-case scenarios, our understanding of insurgent warfare will be dangerously limited. There have been enough insurgencies, successful and unsuccessful, in all parts of the world to provide the facts needed for an excellent data base and full understanding of the phenomena. The same cannot

be said for the subject of the following chapter. A great deal of study has been devoted to the nuclear arena. Although opinions and theories abound, facts are few and far between.

CHAPTER 14

NUCLEAR ISSUES

As long as there is a nuclear balance, there will be a series of strategic issues that divide students and practitioners of nuclear "arts and science." The reason for a high degree of disagreement, as argued in chapter 9, is the low level of science involved in assessing nuclear dynamics. Since there is so little evidence about basic concepts and dynamics, the debate proceeds in an empirical vacuum unimpeded by facts. Instead, analysts debate empirically unverified premises and arguments (some would call these prejudices) without fear of being refuted. In a strategy area where underlying beliefs rather than hard facts play such an important role, understanding these beliefs is important if there is ever to be consensus on the thorny issues inherent in nuclear strategy.

Perspective on Nuclear Issues

A major underlying belief or perspective which conditions the way people look at the issues is their view of whether nuclear war can be limited. If one believes that a nuclear war cannot be limited, the only interesting nuclear question—which serves as the central criterion for judging individual issues—is how deterrence might fail. From this question, issues are judged to the extent that they contribute to the likelihood deterrence might or might not fail.

If one believes that a nuclear war can, at least in principle, be limited, then additional questions about the issues can be raised. One such question is the terms on which nuclear war might be terminated short of all-out exchange. If the outcome of an issue area would make it more likely that war could be

terminated—specially on favorable terms—that outcome is desirable. A second question is what additional requirements for forces and planning are imposed if one considers actually fighting a limited nuclear war.

In addition to one's beliefs about limitability, two other underlying perspectives help frame positions on nuclear issues. By looking at these individually and then in combination, one can gain further insight into how different people view the problems as well as clarify one's own perspectives.

The first is one's belief about the stability of the present nuclear balance. The criterion for stability, of course, is the question of the maintenance of deterrence and whether the balance is becoming more or less stable (is nuclear war becoming more or less likely). As in the case of whether nuclear war can be limited, there are two basic positions.

The first position is that the nuclear balance is stable. To those who maintain that the balance is stable, stability is the major characteristic of nuclear balance and the balance has become more stable over time. The major evidence those who believe in a stable balance cite is, first and foremost, the success of deterrence to this point. Since they realize that one cannot logically demonstrate the success of deterrence, they argue that so far there has been the perfect number of nuclear wars. Moreover, they believe a nuclear war between the superpowers would most likely begin accidentally or as the result of a crisis getting out of control. Supporters of stability point to the series of formal and informal superpower agreements erected to avoid either of these occurrences and especially to the absence of crises with escalatory potential during the past 15 to 20 years in US-Soviet relations.

Those who support this position also tend toward the old saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." In other words, proposals for change, and particularly change that would radically alter the current nuclear balance, are viewed with suspicion by those who believe deterrence works well now. From this

perspective, those who propose change to improve the nuclear balance must prove that the changes will have the desired effect before any alteration is made.

The other side of this perspective is that the nuclear balance is inherently unstable and that the longer the nuclear balance of terror endures, the more likely is nuclear war. Although evidence for this position is equally restricted, the major points made in support of this contention include the problem of nuclear proliferation to third world countries (horizontal proliferation) and growing imbalances in the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers that might tempt one side or the other – notably the Soviets – to start a nuclear war.

Interestingly, this position is taken by analysts at both ends of the political spectrum and is used to support diametrically opposite conclusions. One group who obviously would support this position is the nuclear disarmers. They maintain that the only way to overcome the growing likelihood of nuclear war is to do away completely with the weapons. At the other extreme, advocates of strong defenses and large defense expenditures argue that the failure of the United States to compete in weapons programs with the Soviets has contributed to an imbalance that, if not redressed, could lead the Soviets to conclude that they could win a nuclear war.

Those who believe that the nuclear balance is unstable are much more amenable to change, including radical change, in nuclear dynamics; they argue that the system is indeed broke and needs fixing. Where they differ among themselves is in the nature of what constitutes redress. Opinions range from the extremes of total and complete nuclear disarmament to the advocacy of counterforce-capable offensive weaponry and strategic missile defense.

The second perspective, to return to an analogy raised in chapter 9, regards which aspect of the security dilemma a person emphasizes. If one is primarily concerned with the absolute need to maintain deterrence (the first aspect of the dilemma), then developments that deal, for instance, with

preparations for conducting a protracted, limited nuclear war (e.g., improved C^3I capabilities) are beside the point unless they can be linked to enhanced deterrence. If one concentrates one's attention on the consequences should deterrence fail, then developments that would ameliorate the consequences of failed deterrence have much greater salience.

These two perspectives can be combined in matrix form to demonstrate how they affect the questions one asks about nuclear issues (fig. 5). The upper left and lower right cells present the purest and most radically opposed alternatives.

	Security Dilemma Emphasis	
View of System	Deterrence	Failures
Stable	How do you maintain system?	What would make system fail?
Unstable	How do you stabilize system?	How do you reform, change system?

Figure 5. Viewpoint/Emphasis Matrix.

The upper left cell represents those who believe that the system of deterrence basically works well and should be retained. As already noted, they tend to view proposals to alter the relationships and dynamics with suspicion. At the other extreme, those who feel the current system is inherently unstable and worry that we are on a path toward nuclear war advocate the most radical changes, albeit across a wide range of options. The other two cells represent more synthetic positions. Those who feel that the system is basically stable but who worry about the failure of deterrence focus their attention on what could make deterrence fail. They advocate mechanical or other changes to make that failure less likely. Similarly, those who feel the current regime is unstable but that deterrence is the major goal, also focus on reforms that make deterrence more viable.

Current Issues

These perspectives color the ways in which different analysts view issues. Knowing how a particular observer stands on the questions of the limitability of nuclear war, the stability of the nuclear regime, and the relative importance of the aspects of the security dilemma goes a long way toward allowing predictions about what that individual thinks about specific issues. This can be seen by looking at three current issues, all of which, in one form or another, are perennial parts of the nuclear debate. The three issues are offensive force modernization, missile defenses, and arms control and arms reduction.

Offensive Force Modernization

When President Reagan entered office in 1981, one of his first actions was to announce the need to upgrade more strenuously America's offensive nuclear capabilities. His contention was that America's comparative nuclear strength with the Soviets had eroded during the period of unilateral disarmament that followed the end of the Vietnam War. To right that situation, he proposed to invigorate all three legs of the Triad. This program has provided controversy throughout his administration.

Support for and opposition to the program, and especially their extent, have varied depending on the first premises people have about the nuclear balance and their assessments of strategy deriving from those premises. Those who support the basic position that the balance is stable and remains so as long as the condition of assured destruction (AD) holds generally have viewed the program as excessive. To those who believe in limited nuclear options, vigorous expansion in all areas is necessary to provide weapons appropriate to the range of options.

Some force elements have been less controversial than others. There is disagreement about the need for the B-1B bomber, but that debate has been based more on the aircraft's performance characteristics and costs than on philosophical differences. The *Ohio*-class submarine (also known as Trident), because it only reinforces the guarantee that the United States would have retaliatory force available, has similarly been the subject of little controversy.

The most controversial elements of the program have been and continue to be missile systems with counterforce capability. These weapons are the Peacekeeper (MX) ICBM and the D5 missile for the Trident. Disagreements, which have been part of the reason for congressional reluctance to allow deployment of the Peacekeeper, are over whether the United States should develop extensive counterforce capability. Proponents of AD argue generally that such capability is undesirable; it is unnecessary for destroying Soviet society, and Soviet knowledge that Americans could engage in significant offensive damage limitation through a preemptive strike could be destabilizing (it could produce an incentive to initiate nuclear war). Proponents of limited options, on the other hand, tend to support counterforce capability because many of the targets identified in limited options are counterforce targets that require very accurate weapons.

The point of all this is that advocacy of or opposition to particular elements of force modification generally reflects more basic positions about nuclear dynamics. A person who opposes Peacekeeper, for instance, is likely to be someone who believes that the current balance is pretty stable (meaning change is not necessarily desirable) and that deterrence is the proper emphasis in the security dilemma. Conversely, a proponent of Peacekeeper or the Trident D5 is likely to have the set of values associated with the perspective that deterrence might fail and that limited options deter best.

Strategic Defense

Questions about defending against missile attack have been a controversial part of the strategic landscape for more than 20 years. Disagreements focus on the issues of whether missile defenses are feasible technologically, whether they are affordable, and whether they are desirable in terms of their effects on the nuclear balance.

President Reagan opened the second round of public debates about such defenses in his address of 23 March 1983, in which he called for defensive systems that would render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," thereby allowing for their dismantling, and hence an end to the nuclear balance of terror. This proposal, dubbed Star Wars by the press and officially named the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), has been an important part of the strategic nuclear debate ever since.

Although much of the debate has occurred during the Reagan years, Reagan did not create the idea of strategic defense or of exotic defenses that are often included in public discussions of the subject. The first public debate on defenses against nuclear missiles centered on antiballistic missiles (ABMs) in the 1960s. ABMs are one form that strategic defense might take, wherein defensive missiles would be used to intercept and destroy offensive reentry vehicles. For a variety of reasons, the 1960s' debate resulted in the public decision not to build such defenses (although one ABM site at Grand Forks, North Dakota, was built and briefly commissioned). SDI is simply the second joining of the debate.

Similarly, the idea of using such exotic technologies as lasers for strategic defense is hardly novel. Public sources record early programs in this area during the 1950s, and possibly earlier, and the Carter administration announced the formation of an Office of Directed Energy Transfer within the Pentagon during its term.

Advocacy of or opposition to SDI tends to reflect basic positions on nuclear dynamics. Those who believe in the basic

stability of the system and in the sanctity of deterrence based in a realization of societal vulnerability are suspicious of SDI, especially if it is conceived as a population defense. In this view, a strategic defense represents a radical alteration of the strategic balance that is probably unnecessary (because the system works) and possibly destabilizing (since SDI could remove useful inhibitions presently induced by the recognition of vulnerability).

Advocates of SDI tend to reflect different values. Many, including the president, are at least implicitly arguing that deterrence based on mutual vulnerability is intolerable because of the balance of terror on which it is based; they are, in other words, emphasizing the failure of deterrence within the security dilemma. Moreover, their wish to make radical alterations in the current system reflects conviction that the system is unstable, or there would be no reason for the change.

Another source of disagreement is effectiveness. Critics tend to maintain that any type of "astrodome" defense to provide virtually total protection for the population is technically impossible. Advocates, on the other hand, give at least rhetorical support to perfect population defenses but have more hope for good but less-than-perfect defenses.

Cost is also a major issue. Since SDI does not exist, placing realistic parameters on its cost is impossible and estimates vary by orders of magnitude ($50 billion to one trillion dollars for a fully deployed, space-based system). Critics add that the cost of SDI itself is only one part of the cost of strategic defense. In addition, they maintain that if one is serious about population defense, there is a need (at indeterminate cost) for an Air Defense Initiative for protection against bombers and cruise missiles. Moreover, should the Soviets also deploy their version of SDI, NATO's nuclear deterrent capability would be effectively negated leaving only the conventional balance to maintain deterrence there. Since NATO is currently at a sizable disadvantage in the conventional balance, critics

maintain that a costly upgrading of NATO conventional capability must be included in the cost of SDI.

Arms Control and Arms Reduction

Reaching strategic arms control agreements with the Soviet Union is a subject about which almost everyone has an opinion. At one extreme are those who feel the arms control enterprise is a fool's game that should not be pursued. Some in the Reagan administration have argued that such activities are "bad medicine" because the United States either ends up at a negotiated disadvantage or when it secures a negotiated advantage, the Soviets cheat. At the other extreme are those (many of whom are also in the Reagan administration) who feel that arms control is inherently a good idea because it ensures that the superpowers are talking to one another. This, they believe, may reduce the overall tensions between the two even if it does not reduce specific risks or consequences of war.

There are, of course, a variety of positions between the two extremes. A major source of confusion has been in viewing arms control as a value rather than as an instrumentality that may sometimes be useful in attaining values. Those who argue that arms control is either inherently good or bad miss the point; arms control processes are means to an end that can be used to achieve strategic goals when they happen to apply. They do not apply all the time, but there are occasions when arms control processes can be useful.

The example of the negotiations over intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in Europe during the late 1980s reflects these underlying values. The proposal to eliminate intermediate forces completely produced much controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. Support and opposition reflected different underlying values about the nuclear and conventional balances in Europe quite parallel to similar assessments about the US-Soviet strategic balance.

Supporters of INF elimination were essentially arguing for a backing away from the nuclearization of conflict in Europe. This position is especially popular among Europeans who would "host" such a war and hence are its potential victims. Advocacy of INF elimination reflects a primary interest in that part of the security dilemma most concerned with the consequences should deterrence fail.

Opposition has come from those who believe that the existence of nuclear forces on European soil reinforces (or, in some cases, underlies) deterrence of general war in Europe. Concerned primarily with the deterrence half of the security dilemma, opponents believe that the conventional balance so favors the Soviets that only the risk of escalation to theater nuclear war that, in turn, could spread to general nuclear war deters the Soviets from conventional war. Without INF, they argue, deterrence can only be assured by a massive investment in conventional forces to correct the current imbalance, an action that NATO allies on both sides of the Atlantic have shown little enthusiasm for undertaking.

The examples could, of course, be expanded. What one thinks about other matters on the negotiating table at Geneva (reducing offensive arsenals, space-based defenses) also reflects more basic values one holds about the nuclear balance. Although arguments are often stated in terms of support or opposition to arms control issues per se, they usually reflect more basic positions.

In sum, without the empirical evidence available in other areas, the strategist dealing with nuclear issues must deal with predispositions that are often polarized. An understanding of the foundations of these predispositions is one of the few tools in the strategist's kit offering significant leverage in the struggle to reach consensus in the nuclear arena.

CHAPTER 15

INTERESTS, RISK, AND STRATEGY

The preceding three chapters sought to define a range of military contingencies and associated problems confronting the United States. Each chapter presented a planning case for those who make and implement policy and devise strategy to carry out policy. Each contingency—conventional war in Europe, unconventional war in the third world, and strategic nuclear war with the Soviet Union—represents a real, legitimate concern for the strategymaker. American political leadership has determined that US vital interests are involved in some way in all three cases. Unfortunately, adequate resources to deal comprehensively with each contingency are not apt to be available.

All of this means that strategymaking must deal with risk (the difference between threat and the capability to deal with threat). More fundamentally, this means that it is impossible as a practical matter to guarantee that all US interests are secure.

If risk cannot be eliminated, certain questions must be asked. First, what interests are most important to the United States? That, of course, is a political question that must be answered by relevant political authorities. While there is broad agreement on the most fundamental interests, such as maintaining the physical integrity of the United States, there is disagreement about where to draw the line between vital interests worth fighting over and lesser interests. Moreover, the line between vital and major interests moves with changes in political mood. This is an environment factor with which the strategist must live.

A second question is, which interests are most at risk? In other words, are the most important interest areas the ones where the disparities between threat and capability are greatest? Put a slightly different way, where are failures of deterrence most likely, thus creating the greatest likelihood that Americans will be called to arms?

This basic question is clothed in ambiguity and irony. Clearly the contingencies that involve the most vital American interests and thus must be deterred are a Soviet strategic nuclear attack on the United States and a Warsaw Pact thrust against NATO. Certainly great amounts of American resources have been devoted to developing the capabilities to reduce risk in these areas, and a major part of the ongoing defense policy debate is whether these capabilities are adequate. But are these the most likely contingencies in which Americans may have to fight? It is not entirely clear that they are.

The key factor here may be nuclear weapons. The nuclear capabilities that both sides have developed are so awesome and deadly that they may virtually preclude intentional nuclear war between the superpowers. Moreover, any military clash between the United States and the Soviet Union is a potential strategic nuclear war that includes the possibility of producing mutual destruction regardless of the intentions of either side. Regardless of how low a likelihood one attaches to the escalatory potential of any situation (and the estimate will, by its nature, be artificial), that potential is the central military reality of superpower relations and *both sides know it.*

What this creates is a paradox of sorts. Stated simply, as the world has become a decidedly more deadly place because of nuclear weapons, it may simultaneously have become a less dangerous place – the likelihood of war may actually have been reduced. Nuclear weapons, in other words, may not only deter nuclear war, they may preclude *any* war between the possessors of nuclear arsenals. As long as both superpowers recognize the risk that any war between them could eventuate

in mutual societal destruction, they are unlikely, as conscious acts of policy, to initiate such a war.

If this dynamic is indeed descriptive of reality (and not everyone would agree that it is), does it change the way one looks at priorities and at strategy? Do nuclear weapons indeed change the way the military instrument of power is employed and the way we must thus plan for its employment. Accepting the risk of charges of heterodoxy, one can develop an argument that modern nuclear capacities influence, to the point of change, the way we think about military power – at least in the ways that superpowers use military power – in four ways.

The first influence has to do with deterring nuclear war – the primary purpose of nuclear weapons. If weapons capabilities have become such that deterrence is based on the mutually held fear of the consequences of deterrence failing, what is the deterrence problem? It is not, as much of the traditional debate would have it, a matter of issuing effective threats, since what deters is the fear of war's consequences. In that case, maintaining deterrence would seem to have two major requirements. On one hand, strategy must be such that neither side loses its fear of the consequences of nuclear war. One must weigh such things as nuclear disarmament and missile defenses in that light. On the other hand, strategy must aim at ensuring that nuclear war does not start by inadvertence. Crisis avoidance and crisis management must seek to avoid situations where the superpowers might accidentally be dragged into war.

The second influence is in deterring conventional war in Europe. If it is difficult to argue that the conventional capabilities of the NATO alliance have effectively deterred Soviet aggression, then continued war avoidance (assuming hostile Soviet intention) must rest on one of two pillars. These are continued reliance on the extension of deterrence from the central nuclear relationship whereby conventional war is avoided for fear it will become strategic nuclear war (so-called

extended deterrence) or a concerted upgrade of NATO conventional capabilities. To argue movement away from NATO nuclear dependency without a prior commitment to enhanced conventional capabilities appears to be a self-contradiction.

The deterrent effects of nuclear weapons on both strategic nuclear and NATO conventional war create a third influence on strategic thinking in what can be called the nuclear paradox. The paradox is that using military force to obtain those things clearly vital to the United States – the physical survival of the United States and defense of our NATO and Northeast Asian allies – could threaten our survival. As a result, those interests clearly vital (and thus by definition worth fighting over) are the interests over which we cannot fight, since doing so threatens survival. To make the paradox complete, this means that the only interests we can fight to protect occur in situations where the superpowers do not come into direct conflict; otherwise, the danger of escalation to nuclear war exists. In most depictions, the places where superpower interests do not come into conflict are in areas of the world where US interests are *not* vital (and hence by definition not worth fighting over). Thus, the paradox created by nuclear weapons is that they mean we cannot fight in those places and over those things that are important enough to justify war, but we can fight in places and over things that are not worth a war.

Arising from the nuclear paradox is the fourth influence on strategy. Given sufficient vigilance to maintain the conditions that have produced a low likelihood of a thermonuclear or conventional NATO conflict, the most likely occasions for American use of armed force in support of national interests occur in the third world. This presents both political and strategic problems for the United States. Politically, third world involvements inevitably dredge up analogies with Vietnam and raise questions about whether vital US interests are involved in any particular situation. Strategically, all of the problems of counterinsurgency must be overcome, and this

involves changing some deeply held beliefs and prejudices about insurgency and counterinsurgency.

This discussion is not intended as a doctrinaire tour de force of the military problems facing the United States or their solutions. Rather, it is intended to suggest that the conditions for using military force in support of vital American interests may be changing under the force of changing circumstances. In the process, the structure of risks may also be undergoing modification in ways that strategists must recognize and to which they must adapt if they are to fashion appropriate means to relevant ends.

A final point is suggested as well. This text may create an impression of extreme complexity and ambiguity in the environment and problems that strategists must face, and this is an appropriate impression. The real world is complex and ambiguous and contains real problems. As former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt once observed, one does not solve real problems, one works them. Real problems, in other words, do not have easy answers, or "school solutions"; rather, they are the difficult province within which the strategist seeks to cope.